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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

ART IN TWO MAJOR THACKERAY NOVELS

by

LOIS ANN JEFFERY

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, for acceptance, a thesis entitled ART IN TWO MAJOR THACKERAY NOVELS submitted by Lois Ann Jeffery in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

R. D. McMaster
Supervisor

Inez Mumaugh

Norman Yates

Date October 2, 1974.

N A Hoge

ABSTRACT

Thackeray began his artistic career as a visual artist in the early 1830's but was forced by circumstances into journalism. By the time of his death in 1863, he had been an owner or part owner of two newspapers, a Paris correspondent, an artist, a writer of magazine articles, a caricaturist, a principal contributor to Punch, a novelist, a lecturer, and finally an editor of a magazine. And it was his experience in these worlds which provided the detail for his examination of art. Thackeray was consistent in his ideas; all are present from his earliest criticism and, although there is a shift of emphasis in some areas, none essentially changed.

For over a hundred years, Thackeray has been victim of the charge of scepticism and cynicism, of a tendency to sneer at art, an accusation which is discredited on a review of his work. The thesis is, first, an examination of the historical development of his critical ideas which arose out of his personal involvement with art and, second, of his novels Pendennis and The Newcomes. His views on the proper subject of art, the proper narrative stance, an adherence to realistic art deriving from nature, and the social position of artists, are amplified in the novels. But Thackeray was also concerned with the degree of artificiality in Victorian society, and Pendennis and The Newcomes, partly through an investigation of the worlds of journalism and pictorial art, become exposés of artifice in life. The thesis follows the development of Thackeray's concern for art in all its complexities from his critical journalism, through elaboration in Pendennis of his artistic position,

to his eventual presentation in The Newcomes of the artist as a central figure of integrity and social relevance.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter		Page
	Introduction	1
	Pendennis	39
	The Newcomes	71
	Conclusion	104
	Notes	109
	Bibliography	113

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

	Page
Wrapper design from Pendennis.	38
Wrapper design from The Newcomes	70

INTRODUCTION

Thackeray was subject in his own time, as he has been ever since, to criticism of extremely varying tone and judgement. Charlotte Brontë, dedicating the second edition of Jane Eyre to Thackeray, saw him as "the legitimate high priest of truth," as the "first social regenerator of the day,"[1] at a time when he was known primarily for Vanity Fair. But a review in The Times in 1855, which specifically analyzed The Newcomes, declared "we should remember that Mr. Thackeray is not required to preach, and that he does not attempt it. It is something altogether foreign to his function," and "Mr. Thackeray is no fool, he is a great humorist, and we only regret that he is not a great moralist also."[2]

That two such opposing views should be expressed within a few years is interesting in a study of Thackeray's artistic ideas, for it is evident that his attitudes changed very little however much critical opinion of them did. Of course, it is easier now, when Thackeray's anonymous and pseudononymous works are available, as are his letters, to see the consistent and coherent development of his theories. What sometimes seems to be needless repetition on his part was necessary at the time to correct false critical judgement of himself.

Although Thackeray was often accused of having a cavalier attitude toward art, in the final analysis, his attitude was rather one of personal uncertainty. His artistic criteria altered very little and even his earliest criticism bears some relationship to his novels.

Thackeray first attempted an artistic career in 1833 when, on obtaining a patrimony, he devoted himself to painting in Paris. Up to this point, his artistic efforts had consisted of contributions to The Snob and The Gownsman, student newspapers at Cambridge, and to The National Standard, a paper he owned from May 1833 to February 1834. Having left Cambridge degreeless and subsequently abandoning study for the bar, he entertained, as an independent gentleman, no compunction to follow a more profitable career. While still involved with The National Standard, he wrote his mother that "I have been thinking very seriously of turning artist--I think I can draw better than do anything else & certainly like it better than any other occupation why shouldn't I--It requires a three years apprenticeship however, wh. is not agreeable--but afterwards the way is clear and pleasant enough; & doubly so for an independent man who is not obliged to look to his brush for his livelihood" (Letters, I, 262).[3] But after a year of art study, his insufficiencies as an artist were evident, for he wrote a friend, "in these six months, I have not done a thing worth looking at. O God, when will Thy light enable my fingers to work, and my colours to shine?--if in another six months, I can do no better, I will arise and go out and hang myself" (Letters, I, 279).

But with the loss of his patrimony through speculation and bank failure, Thackeray had to consider both his talent and application more seriously, and he explored the possibility of supporting himself by his pictorial art. His first independent publication was a series of lithographs burlesquing classical ballet, Flore et Zephyr, and, unsuccessfully, he applied to Dickens to illustrate Pickwick Papers. Discouraged in his art, faced with financial exigencies, he turned to journalism.

Many of Thackeray's early reviews were art criticisms of exhibitions in London and in Paris. Most of them, at least until 1843, were written under the pseudonym of Michael Angelo Titmarsh, and were published in Fraser's, The Times, and The Pictorial Times.

British art was controlled by the Royal Academy, established in 1768, and partially by those individuals who constituted the art market. Until the nineteenth century, portraiture had been both the most popular and the most lucrative branch of painting. The nobility, who were then almost the sole patrons of art, preferred to see their own likenesses preserved for posterity, and portrait artists could become relatively wealthy. The Royal Academy's preference for historical or classical pictures coincided with the growing feelings of nationalism and insularity following Waterloo; painting which could reflect the heroism of Englishmen was its ideal of high art. By the early years of Victoria's reign, both branches had slipped greatly in public prestige. The growing affluence of the middle class provided a completely new market of individuals interested neither in portraits nor in historical paintings, which in fact had never been very popular with the public, but in simple narrative pictures which were easily understood and which could be used as decorations in their homes. The popularity in mid-century of genre and narrative painting, scenes from contemporary life with a moral, coincided with the rising Victorian interest in domesticity and the insistence on moral education. Thackeray completely reflected this change in artistic values although some of his early criticism did anticipate it. He argued that as the public, especially the rising merchant class, provided the market for art, it controlled the quality as well, discouraging "all attempts at the higher style of art" (II, 352),[4] and controlled the artist:

"Bread is more sacred even than art, a poor artist here is led, and does not lead astray" (II, 350). This could be turned to the advantage of artists, for, as he was later to urge writers, dignity in art derived from education of the public. "The world loves bad pictures, truly: but yours it is to teach the world for you know better. Copy nature. Don't content yourselves with idle recollections of her" (II, 378) was his advice in 1839. A great artist, like a great writer, was a priest of nature with "a tender, yearning sympathy and love for God's beautiful world and creatures" (II, 502). In addition, dexterity was less important than this sincerity, this appeal to the human sympathy; "a skilful hand is only the second artistical quality, worthless . . . without the first, which is a great heart" (II, 386).

In "Strictures on Pictures," an article for Fraser's, he delineated his hierarchy of art which was almost a complete reversal of the dictates of the academy; portraiture and historical painting ranked far beneath his choice of genre as the greatest branch of pictorial art, while somewhere in between these branches he put landscape, animal and mythological subjects. Considering Thackeray's general inclination for the past, it is curious that he disliked historical painting so much, but he felt it was pretentious, covering yards of canvas, and often erroneous, for the artist could alter incident and costume at will; and, in general, heroic paintings divorced from nature did not appeal to him. He treated this kind of art as a disease, "a young man has sometimes a fit of what is called 'historical painting'" (II, 572), and was pleased to see English painters turn to narrative art. Of portraiture, he did not consider there was much to say at all, but accepted the basic economic motivation for artists.

The Royal Academy, according to Jeremy Maas in Victorian Painters, functioned as an institution against which certain movements could react, and the history of nineteenth-century art reflects the rebellion of groups of artists who intended to correct the failing of the academy: the Clique, the Pre-Raphaelites, and the St. John's Wood Group. In general, Maas' opinion is supported by Thackeray who felt artists should be doing more to control the direction of art: "The young painters . . . asserting loudly their superiority over the pompous old sham classical painters of England are not doing their duty. . . . They paint down to the level of public intelligence, rather that seek to elevate the public to them" (II, 611-12). Thackeray was most impressed by modest efforts in art, often preferring sketches appealing gently to the heart rather than finished canvases. But genre painting with its definite moral impact gave a lopsided view of a society with little poverty or crime and was even more restricted by Victorian decorum than was fiction. Thackeray's insistence on realistic art which, because of its inspiration from nature, should illustrate both vice and virtue in fiction did not affect his preferences in pictorial art to the same degree. However, he was consistent in his analogy of artist to preacher; the public would be best advised to "listen to the man of timid, mild commonplaces, because the simple words he speaks come from his heart, and so find a way directly to yours; where if perhaps you can't find belief for them, you still are sure to receive them with respect and sympathy. There are many such professors at the easel as well as the pulpit" (II, 553).

The attitudes which Thackeray expressed about painting, in themselves unremarkable as criticism, anticipated certain attitudes in

his novel writing: a narrative stance of humility, a distrust of posture, an interest in the domestic and a sense of moral responsibility. The obligations and restrictions of the artist in relationship to his public preoccupied him as did the relationship between nature and art. All these concerns became important themes of his work, developed against the background of pictorial and literary art worlds.

Thackeray's early views about fiction are best seen against the background of his involvement with Fraser's in the early 1830's. Fraser's Magazine for Town and Country, first appearing in 1830 with William Maginn as editor, operated, according to Miriam Thrall in Rebellious Fraser's, as an expression of open revolt refuting the "doctrines and traditions that were hampering scientific and theological, as well as social, development."[5] Maginn, himself famous as a satirist and magazine contributor, functioned as the guiding spirit for the magazine which evolved into "one of the most powerful weapons of personal and political warfare that the press [had] devised."[6] Distinguished from its contemporaries by three things: its independent politics, its criticism of contemporary writing, and its sense of humor, Fraser's attacked practically every prominent political and literary figure. Thackeray was brought into the staff of Fraser's through his association with Maginn and although his first acknowledged articles appeared in 1837, under the pseudonym of Charles Yellowplush, it is generally believed that he worked in collaboration for some years previously.[7] Considering itself as a critical judge of literature, regarding fiction as capable of exerting a social and moral influence upon the reading public, and demanding that fiction be based on personal experience, Fraser's chose, not surprisingly,

as one of its early literary victims, Edward Lytton Bulwer. As one of the most prolific and popular novelists, Bulwer had a facility for adapting his literary style to current public taste; as a prominent political figure and a member of the aristocracy, he proved to be a perfect target, representing everything antithetical to Fraser's and to Maginn.

Bulwer's literary philosophy, essentially contained in the essay "On Art in Fiction," advocated that the purpose of great art was to exalt, not imitate, nature and to deal with criminals, for "in the portraiture of evil and criminal characters lies the widest scope for an author profoundly versed in the philosophy of the human heart."[8] The combination of terror and pity in one character could never disgust in high art. The reception of that philosophy is best illustrated by specific attacks against it, known as Bulwer-baiting. With Pelham, The Disowned, and Devereux already before the public, Bulwer published Paul Clifford in February 1830, the same month as Fraser's first issue. Although the book generally received good reviews, Fraser's, charting its independent course, connected Bulwerism with cant, humbug, hollowness, and pretentious writing, all examples of literary mediocrity, and charged that his books had not "developed in a practical manner a code of morals."[9] The rationale for such opinions was the belief that literature had the power to influence its readers, and the reading public, a rapidly increasing percentage of the population, had need of strong moral leadership. Pretentious writing was more apt to confuse the readers or even obliterate the moral exemplum. Fraser's made it clear, however, that Bulwer's social background necessarily separated him from

the intellectual pursuits essential to a good novelist. In spite of its own critical tenets, the magazine made no attempt to limit its comments on Bulwer to mere literary evaluation but resorted to personal abuse and satirical portraits, a common enough practice in conventional literary criticism.

In answer to the public demand for sensational novels dealing with some aspect of crime, Bulwer's early works either attacked the legal system as an instrument of class oppression or centered on underworld figures; in his theory of high art, criminal heroes were the only logical choice. As he later stated in the 1840 preface to Eugene Aram, "fiction, whether in the drama, or the higher class of romance, seeks its materials and grounds its lessons in the chronicles of passion and crime,"[10] and, as a philosopher, he felt novels should not be confined to character interaction but must also contain ideas of a profound nature. His choice of the Newgate novel as a vehicle for these ideas proved unfortunate in view of succeeding circumstances, for Maginn, Fraser's, and Thackeray regarded this glamorization of crime as a potentially dangerous influence upon readers. This basic difference of Bulwer and his critics formed the foundation of a campaign against Bulwer of more than fifteen years' duration.

Fraser's reaction to Eugene Aram, a parody "Elizabeth Brownrigge: A Tale," solidified the form Newgate criticism was to take. In the dedication, congratulations were offered for teaching the writer, presumably Maginn, the means of literary success, a success based on confusion of vice and virtue, on characterization devoid of the general principles of nature, and on sympathy for the villain.[11] Directed as this preface was

against Bulwer, it also contained a condemnation of the "enlightened and delighted" reading public in its taste for this type of fiction.

With the departure of Maginn as Fraser's editor in 1837, Thackeray assumed greater influence and labored to imitate Maginn in both style and philosophy. As early as 1829, he had written his mother that Devereux had a "misera(ble) composition" (Letters, I, 98) and, three years later in his diary, he criticized both Bulwer's use of a rogue for a hero and the implausibility of the emotions in his novels. Disappointed by this kind of art, his wish on both occasions expressed the hope that "when my novel is written it will be something better I trust" (Letters, I, 198).

In his early satirical articles for Fraser's, the Yellowplush series, Thackeray took over attacks on the Newgate novel in general and on Bulwer in particular. Thackeray, like Maginn, could not refrain from personal comments presenting "Sawedwadgeorgeearllittnbulwig" in "Mr. Yellowplush's Ajew" (I, 303), and in the later "Epistles to the Literati" which Thackeray admitted to be a "thundering article against Bulwer" (Letters, I, 395), Yellowplush attacked both Bulwer's theory and practice of art: "Let us not be too prowd, my dear Barnet, and fansy ourselves marters of the truth, marters or apostles. We are but tradesmen, working for bread, and not for righteousness' sake" (I, 320). Both Yellowplush articles contained the seeds of Thackeray's later concerns--style, sentimentalism, envy, economic reason for writing, and the position of literary men, closer to tradesmen than "marters of the truth." But what began as a specific critical reaction to Bulwer's pretentious narrative stance and, according to Thackeray, his dangerous literary philosophy expanded into a general crusade against the Newgate novel. Thackeray was

able to extend, by a natural inclination for parody, his articles into longer prose works.

Thackeray's campaign indicted also Harrison Ainsworth and Charles Dickens, who were pronounced guilty of literary irresponsibility. The essence of Thackeray's shorter articles for Fraser's,[12] developed more fully in Catherine, was simply that these authors were choosing the wrong subject material; for information on low or criminal life, one was better advised to consult the Newgate Calendar and penny newspapers, more accurate sources of crimes, plots, and tortures with a fitting nemesis for the central figure. Designed as these articles were to illuminate the faults of Newgate novelists, it was in Catherine, a fictional serial in Fraser's, that Thackeray enlarged upon his own concept of the mission of a moral writer who must counteract sensational fiction. While partial blame rested with the reading public for creating a demand for this fiction, the onus ultimately resided with literary men who as "men of genius . . . have no business to make these characters interesting or agreeable." Instead, readers ought to be "made cordially to detest, scorn, loathe, abhor, and abominate all people of this kidney" (III, 46). Dickens, Bulwer, and Ainsworth had all neglected their moral duty by creating interest in rogues: "If we are to be interested by rascally actions, let us have them with plain faces, and let them be performed, not by virtuous philosophers, but by rascals" (III, 31). The objectionable characteristic of an elaborate style was that it allowed the author to take "a scoundrel, and cause us to weep and whimper over him as though he were a very saint" (III, 175). Although his "Catherine cathartic" was intended to cure a taste for this kind of fiction by

deliberate gruesomeness, Thackeray himself was not satisfied, admitting it was:

> . . . a mistake all through--it was not made disgusting enough that is the fact, and the triumph of it would have been to make readers so horribly horrified as to cause them to give up or rather throw up the book and all of it's kind, whereas you see the author had a sneaking kindness for his heroine, and did not like to make her utterly worthless (Letters, I, 433).

Evidently the last statement came as a surprise even to Thackeray, for he had earlier insisted upon the division between vice and virtue: "Let your rogues in novels act like rogues, and your honest men like honest men; don't let us have any juggling and thimblerigging with virtue and vice, so that, at the end of three volumes, the bewildered reader shall not know which is which" (III, 31). But in writing the novel, he found himself compelled to present his criminals as human beings: "Novel-writers make a great mistake in divesting their rascals of all gentle human qualities . . . how dreadfully like a rascal is to an honest man" (III, 78). Bulwer had attempted to present his criminals as heroes, and although Thackeray could never go so far he realized that it was impossible to depict vice as utterly loathsome. His vision of criminals as human beings necessitated the fusion of vice and virtue, a position he favored in his later novels.

The culmination of Thackeray's attacks appeared not in Fraser's but in Punch, whose staff he joined in 1842 and for which he wrote Punch's Prize Novelists--a series of parodies on contemporary novelists: Bulwer, Disraeli, Fenimore Cooper, Lever, G. P. R. James, Mrs. Gore, which Thackeray promised would be good-natured. In George de Barnwell by Sir E. L. B. L. BB. LL. BBB. LLL. Bart., in an attempt to succeed by

burlesque where he had failed by didacticism, Thackeray concentrated on Bulwer's moral approach. Although not as "friendly and meek in spirit" (Letters, II, 271) as Thackeray himself supposed, the article, less energetic than earlier efforts, was a parody of "the splendid length of the words, the frequent employment of the Beautiful and the Ideal, the brilliant display of capitals, the profuse and profound classical learning" (VIII, 83) in Bulwer's novels.

With George de Barnwell, Thackeray's literary animosity toward Bulwer ceased, and in 1849 he privately regretted the savagery of The Yellowplush Papers, although no formal attempt was made at reconciliation until 1853. In an apologetic letter to Bulwer referring to a preface written in late 1852 for an American edition of his works, Thackeray regretted the inclusion of certain articles "which I am sorry to see reproduced, and I ask pardon of the author of The Caxtons for a lampoon which I know he himself has forgiven, and which I wish I could recall. I had never seen that eminent writer but once in public when this satire was penned, and wonder at the recklessness of the young man who could fancy such satire was harmless jocularity, and never calculated that it might give pain" (Letters, III, 278).

It cannot be denied that the possibility of envy against an author of enormous popularity was very great, but Thackeray's final literary position may perhaps best be found in his statement that "there are sentiments in his writings wh. always anger me, big words wh. make me furious, and a premediated fine writing against wh. I cant help rebelling. My antipathy didn't go any farther than this: and it is accompanied by a great deal of admiration" (Letters, II, 485).

Bulwer, of course, had not accepted any of this criticism as valid, its principles being divorced from his own, and complained of Fraser's, Maginn, and Thackeray who "long continued to assail me, not in any form that can fairly be called criticism, but with a kind of ribald impertinence offered, so far as I can remember, to no other writer of my time."[13] That it was often impertinent and often too concentrated cannot be denied, but it was legitimate criticism, integral to Thackeray's concept of art. What he could never seriously accept was Bulwer's literary philosophy coupled with a pretentious style. Both elements were antithetical to Thackeray's insistence on narrative truth which would improve or at least set a precept for social morality. The animosity which Thackeray had displayed in his early days at Fraser's resurfaced, as did his differences with Dickens, in a later controversy of the Guild of Literature and Art.

Harrison Ainsworth, too, came under attack in 1839 for Jack Sheppard, a blatantly sentimentalized treatment of a criminal. Included in the indictment in Catherine, Ainsworth was also subject to various reviews by Thackeray who was alarmed that this kind of novel might prove conducive to crime, investigating as it did "low ruffians of the Newgate Calendar and their profligate companions, with all the interest and genius of romance."[14] The greatest condemnation Thackeray could give Ainsworth was an unfavorable comparison to Fielding. While "vice is never to be mistaken for virtue in Fielding's honest downright books, it goes by its name, and invariably gets its punishment" (III, 390), Ainsworth "dared not paint his hero as the scoundrel he knew him to be; he must keep his brutalities in the background, else the public morals

will be outraged, and so he produces a book quite absurd and unreal, and infinitely more immoral than anything Fielding ever wrote" (III, 390). The hypocritical position of the artist controlled by public taste was to receive more attention from Thackeray later in his career. As a result of the adverse criticism led by Thackeray, Ainsworth ceased to write Newgate novels after 1840.

Discussion of Thackeray's reaction to this kind of art would not be complete without mention of the part played by Dickens, or at least the part ascribed to him by Thackeray. Unlike Bulwer, Dickens was not concerned with expounding a moral philosophy through the mouths of criminal heroes, nor like Ainsworth was he capitalizing on the current taste for sensationalism; in fact, Thackeray was the first to label him a Newgate novelist,[15] and was certainly the most persistent critic in that vein. While preaching that authors have neither experience nor rationale for dealing with characters of low positions, Thackeray maintained that Dickens' characters were totally unrealistic. Nancy, for instance, in Oliver Twist was "the most unreal fantastical personage possible" (III, 198), fantastical because Dickens "dare[d] not tell the truth concerning such young ladies" (III, 198). It was exactly this truth derived from nature which Thackeray praised in Fielding. Dickens' rebuttal in the preface to the third edition of Oliver Twist indicated that the source for these characters had indeed been nature.[16]

These were the three main branches of Thackeray's attack on the Newgate novel and, different as were the philosophies and art of his opponents, the essence of his attacks remained the same. He was concerned here with three aspects of literary art: the suitability of theme,

the treatment of subject matter, and the author's responsibility. As may be supposed, Thackeray was not blind to the crime novel as an instrument of social criticism, but he objected to its sensationalism. Neither the philosophical approach of Bulwer, the sentimental one of Ainsworth, nor the imaginative one of Dickens met his criteria. But, more importantly, he faced the problem of the relationship of the artist to society. Rejecting the idea that an author need only be true to his own personal literary philosophy, Thackeray insisted the literary man had a moral responsibility to consciously instruct the reading public, an opinion supported in his subsequent work.

During the 1830's and 1840's, Thackeray, in his miscellaneous journalism, developed several additional critical tenets. In The Morning Chronicle, at that time the chief rival of The Times, he denounced authors who made political, economic, or religious manifestoes out of their novels, in fact doubting "the fitness of the occasion and often (it must be confessed) the competency of the teacher,"[17] and he referred frequently to his belief that nature was the best source of art. In contrast to the majority of his statements which said what not to do, he advanced specific literary principles. "We stand already committed as to our idea of the tendency and province of the novel," he wrote in 1845, "morals and manners we believe to be the novelist's best themes; and hence prefer romances which do not treat of algebra, religion, political economy or other abstract science."[18] While "morals and manners" provided the only proper subject, he relented a bit in the severity of moral instruction by allowing that "a direct morality is not called for, perhaps, in works of fiction, but that a moral sentiment should pervade them, at least, is no disadvantage."[19]

Thackeray was well aware in these literary reviews that he was striking out independently in his criticism. Early in his career he had complained that "criticism has been a party matter with us till now, and literature a poor political lackey--please God we shall begin ere long to love art for art's sake" (Letters, I, 396), and in the same year, 1839, dismissed the attempts of critics who "for the most part, are down on their knees to authors and artists," (II, 360) neglecting their duty. It is not surprising, in view of the existing criticism, that Thackeray turned to Maginn for precept. If Maginn slashed fiercely in his criticism, nevertheless, he was sustained by a definite critical philosophy. Although Thackeray requested puffs for his own books on occasion and said they had no ultimate effect upon the success of an author, he objected to them as a form of legitimate criticism: "Bad as the system of too much abusing is, the system of too much praising is a thousand times worse; and praise, monstrous, indiscriminate, wholesale, is the fashion of the day" (II, 360). Thackeray's recommendation was basically that critics "must tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth" (II, 361), and if artists neglected their duty "the best cure for humbug [was] satire" (II, 360), his own method.

The aspect of truth in literature, of utmost importance to Thackeray as a critic, became crucial when it confronted him in his own art. Insisting on honesty and truth to nature in fiction, he was faced with reconciling these qualities with accurate facts which might offend. By the time he wrote Pendennis, Thackeray was at a theoretical crossroads: on the one hand, he approved and perhaps envied Fielding's literary freedom; on the other, he felt "Rabelais, Fielding & so forth (apart the

indecencies) are not good reading for women, & only for a small race of men" (Letters, I, 412), and that the literary restrictions of Victorian decorum were necessary and even commendable. He had earlier written that "the world does not tolerate now such satire as that of Hogarth and Fielding, and the world no doubt is right in a great part of its squeamishness" (III, 385). Pendennis had aroused public comment in consequence of Arthur's sexual temptations, so much comment in Thackeray's opinion that he deemed it necessary to insert a preface when the story appeared in book format. Here he reiterated his support of his original statements: his insistence on the personal experience of the author, his dislike of slang and fashionable language, his rejection of rogues as heroes. But his justification for Pen became an inquiry of public taste and control. With the emphasis upon decorum, all literature had changed. In the preface, he wrote: "Since the author of Tom Jones was buried, no writer of fiction among us has been permitted to depict to his utmost power a MAN. We must drape him, and give him a certain conventional simper. Society will not tolerate the Natural in our Art" (XII, xxxvi). Thackeray had attempted to partially remove the restrictions without offending the reader: "A little more frankness than is customary has been attempted in this story; with no bad desire on the writer's part, it is hoped, and with no ill consequence to any reader" (XII, xxxvii). In giving Pendennis the "passions to feel, and the manliness and generosity to overcome them" (XII, xxxvii), Thackeray did not reverse his former opinion but felt that prudery, even if good for the public, was bad for art. Moreover, being shocked by a book was not the same as being corrupted by an immoral one. His belief that "if truth is not

always pleasant, at any rate truth is best" (XII, xxxvii) in no way negated his belief in the obligation of a writer to uphold a conventional moral code. Although Victorian literary decorum was antithetical to his early theory of art because it encouraged half-truths, he eventually had to accept that principle. His development as an artist also no doubt affected his decision, for now he could replace his former dependence upon facts with allusion and innuendo and make his point even more effectively. By 1851, in the fifth lecture of The English Humourists, he found Fielding morally deficient: "I can't say but that I think Fielding's evident liking and admiration for Mr. Jones, shows that the great humourist's moral sense was blunted by his life, and here in Art and Ethics, there is a great error" (XIII, 649). As his literary career progressed, Thackeray became less and less vociferous on the question of public taste so that by the time he became editor of The Cornhill in 1861 he was supporting the status quo. The magazine, reflecting the good manners and good education of its contributors, would be written with the idea of "ladies and children always present" (Letters, III, 161). To this end, he even refused a poem by Elizabeth Barrett Browning and a story by Trollope whose indignant responses echoed Thackeray's earlier stance.

In a society experiencing unprecedented social turmoil, the position of a gentleman was no longer clearly specified, and the definition of this position was being modified. Thackeray found himself in the midst of the confusion. Fraught with insecurity in the loss of his patrimony, his self-concept was further shaken by the low social status of his chosen professions of literature and art, both outside the realm

of middle class respectability. As early as The Yellowplush Papers, he was reacting to the existing definition, for it was a decline in social position for Yellowplush to go from footman to author, but his first detailed examination took the form of "The Snobs of England" where he asked: "What is it to be a gentleman? Is it to be honest, to be gentle, to be generous, to be brave, to be wise, and, possessing all these qualities, to exercise them in the most graceful outward manner?" (IX, 270). The canon of Thackeray's work might be analyzed as a study of the shift in emphasis from rank and money to these qualities. Most of the male characters of his novels were categorized as gentlemen, but the great variety in specimens only served to illustrate middle-class confusion.

Within this social framework, it was difficult for the literary man or artist to ascertain his position. Thackeray, as an art student and journalist in Europe, had seen alternatives to the lack of respectability but found "the case is very different in England, where a grocer's daughter would think she made a misalliance by marrying a painter, and where a literary man (in spite of all we can say against it) ranks below that class of gentry composed of the apothecary, the attorney, the wine-merchant, whose positions, in the country towns at least, are equivocal" (II, 44). Specific portions of Thackeray's examination relevant to the artistic community will be more closely scrutinized in the sections of the study devoted to the novels Pendennis and The Newcomes.

Except in connection with the top magazines and quarterlies, journalism was a disreputable pursuit; those who wrote for newspapers had the lowest status, and all branches were filled with hack writers,

notwithstanding the talented services of men like Dickens, Carlyle, and Forster. Thackeray never became intimate with the Grub Street element, and always considered himself a social and intellectual superior. When he first became a journalist, the quality of an author's literary work was often less important than his social position, and Thackeray himself had lost, with his patrimony, the cherished status of a gentleman. Moreover, he was ambivalent about the correct assessment of the literary man. He was quick to attack the profession on the basis that it was overloaded with men of inferior talents and qualities. These he exposed in his novels, to the dismay of the profession which loudly retaliated. Still, he was insistent that literary men were well treated and rewarded by society and deserved no special consideration.

If Thackeray was careful in publicly asserting the dignity of his profession, his private papers reveal considerable doubt. His basic motivation for journalism was economic; he was, as Carlyle said, writing for his life.[20] During negotiations to publish The Paris Sketch Book in 1840, he wrote "I hope that something good will come out of it all--something better than that odious magazine-work wh. wd. kill any writer in 6 years" (Letters, I, 459). And he had no delusions about the reputation of Punch. He called it "a very low paper" (Letters, II, 54), but one for which he did his best "just as much as if I had been writing for any more dignified periodical" (Letters, II, 82). Magazine writing, which seemed his best talent much to his chagrin, was "a bad trade at the best. The prizes in it [were] fewer and worse than in any other professional lottery" (Letters, II, 137). Up until 1842, Thackeray had hidden behind various pseudonyms: Yellowplush, Fitz-Boodle, the Fat Contributor,

Michael Angelo Titmarsh, being only a few, and even in The Irish Sketch Book attached his own name only to the preface. Of course, this practice militated against wide recognition of his talents, but it also provided a necessary screen, and when the masks were dropped, he was revealed as "a hack writer who sought to remain also a private gentleman."[21] It was all the more imperative for him then to defend the position of the literary man.

Ironic as it may seem, Thackeray's financial success came not from novel writing but from his lectures given in England and America. Presented with this alternative, he was never quite satisfied that lecturing was dignified and was ashamed at the large remuneration. Still, he desperately wanted the money to replace his patrimony, and his letters from these periods reflect his fixation on bank notes.

He was not at all overwhelmed by social success after Vanity Fair in 1847, acting almost as if he had expected it, and found "the great people too perhaps rather surprised that I am [a] gentleman" (Letters, II, 334). Finding himself, after more than ten years, at the "top of the tree" (Letters, II, 333), Thackeray often found that it was not such a comfortable place to be, exposed as he was in turn to criticism and comment from his colleagues. His moralistic concept of art, his knack for parody, his insistence on the social acceptability of the literary profession, were all subjects of his art and of his public confrontations. He made very clear the limitations which public comment on himself might take. It was quite fair to resort to parodies, "that is to say my sort of writing carried to the absurd--that is what I was trying to do in those parodies in Punch," and "to make remarks about my

person, the honesty or dishonesty of my appearance can't injure me--I have pushed the caricaturing of myself almost to affectation" (Letters, II, 455). In fact, all were free to "make fun of my books, my style, my public works--but of me a gentleman--O for shame" (Letters, II, 456).

If literary men held such a tenuous grip on respectability, if their ranks were comprised of hack writers, how was Thackeray to retain his personal dignity and find value in his art? In the last paper of the series, "The Snobs of England," he had written: "To laugh at such [snobs] is Mr. Punch's business. May he laugh honestly, hit no foul blow, and tell the truth when at his very broadest grin--never forgetting that if Fun is good, Truth is still better and Love best of all" (IX, 493), an assertion which he felt required explanation. Although he clearly saw the irony of "worldly men--stained with all sorts of dissoluteness--to set up as popular teachers" (Letters, II, 283), Thackeray, in a letter to Mark Lemon, editor of Punch, now delegated a definite purpose to literary men.

> What I mean applies to my own case & that of all of us--who set up as Satirical-Moralists--and having such a vast multitude of readers whom we not only amuse but teach. And indeed, a solemn prayer to God Almighty was in my thoughts that we may never forget truth & justice and kindness as the great ends of our profession. There's something of the same strain in Vanity Fair. A few years ago I should have sneered at the idea of setting up as a teacher at all, and perhaps at this pompous and pious way of talking about a few papers of jokes in Punch--but I have got to believe in the business, and in many other things since then. And our profession seems to me to be as serious as the Parson's own. (Letters, II, 282)

And it was at this time that he switched from an attitude primarily of attack to one of instruction through the medium of a narrator, usually an older, experienced individual. In Vanity Fair, his narrative position as parson is most apparent, but it was a stance which he never totally

abandoned, reverting to it again in Philip, a novel modelled on the parable of the good Samaritan. However, his manner of presentation mellowed considerably from his stance as a blatant "Satirical-Moralist" to the gentler but no less effective position of a truth-teller touched by compassion. In his lecture "Charity and Humour" in 1853, he could say: "I can't help telling the truth as I view it, and describing what I see. To describe it otherwise than it seems to me would be falsehood in that calling in which it has pleased Heaven to place me; treason to that conscience which says that men are weak; that truth must be told; that fault must be owned; that pardon must be prayed for; and that love reigns supreme over all" (X, 625). If his first stance was evident in Vanity Fair, it was the second which controlled The Newcomes.

Having achieved a degree of success and fame, Thackeray was obliged to examine both his own position and the ability of his professional associates. Although for financial reasons he had been forced into journalism, he never considered himself part of Grub Street, and against his criterion of the moral force of literature measured the ignorance and affectation of hack writers and publishers. His tendency for satire of pretension wherever he found it instigated him to react in Pendennis against the literary scene. The passages causing the furor argued that non-literary people were "to the full, as clever and intellectual" (XII, 440) as literary people, and that the latter seldom read and discussed books. These comments occasioned two editorials, in The Morning Chronicle and in The Examiner, a rebuttal by Thackeray and a rejoinder, again by The Examiner. The two editorials agreed that Thackeray was guilty of a prejudice against literary men. This prejudice, according to The Morning Chronicle, resulted in unflattering portraits of fellow

authors; The Examiner felt that Thackeray had depicted literary men as a group "generally responsible for the vices instead of vices as occasionally incident to the class,"[22] all for the intention of paying court to the non-literary class. Thackeray, in "The Dignity of Literature" printed in The Morning Chronicle, refuted both accusations by asserting that he had "never, to his knowledge, been ashamed of his profession, or (except for its dullness) of any single line from his pen" (X, 583), and that generally authors were the recipients of a "kindly regard in which the whole reading nation holds them" (X, 584). Rather than endeavoring to deprecate his calling, Thackeray emphasized that "the literary profession is not held in dispute; nobody wants to disparage it; no man loses his social rank, whatever it may be, by practising it" (X, 585), and he maintained "that the social estimation of the man of letters is as good as it deserves to be, and as good as that of any other professional man" (X, 585). The moral which he sought to make clear both in Pendennis and in "The Dignity of Literature" was that "it was the duty of a literary man, as well as any other, to practise regularity and sobriety, to love his family and to pay his tradesmen" (X, 586). The whole tone of Thackeray's article suggested that The Examiner and The Morning Chronicle protested too much and were unsure of their own positions while he was quite sure of his. This sense of security was a new element in his work; Thackeray could not have written "The Dignity of Literature" prior to his success with Vanity Fair. Later he admitted to a partial retraction: "The words in Pendennis are untenable be hanged to them: but they were meant to apply to a particular class of literary men, my class who are the most ignorant men under the Sun, myself included I mean. But I wrote so carelessly that it appears as if I would speak of all, & even if it

were true I ought not to have written what I did" (Letters, II, 636). Nevertheless, he stood by his opinions and those developed earlier in "On Literary Snobs," one of the papers from "The Snobs of England." In that article, he hinted that the reason society did not respect authors enough was largely their own fault; authors were secretly ashamed of their profession, lacked any sense of fraternity, and were often jealous of colleagues.

These protestations were no new revelation as Thackeray had established his public position regarding his profession quite definitely in an essay of 1846 fulsomely titled "A Brother of the Press on the History of a Literary Man, Laman Blanchard, and the Chances of the Literary Profession."[23] Rejecting any idea analogous to Bulwer's that literary men were a race endowed with mystical inspiration, Thackeray reduced the profession to monetary terms, seeing desire for gain as a necessary motivation for creative productivity. Always considering himself a gentleman, altered only by the loss of his patrimony, Thackeray could not accept that his social success might be hampered by his profession. The obvious solution, then, was money; Thackeray himself had pleaded financial exigency in insisting on publishing George de Barnwell in spite of opposition: "I cant afford to give up my plan. It is my bread indeed for next year" (Letters, II, 270). Even Bulwer with his theory of high art wrote from monetary necessity. Perhaps Thackeray was not far wrong in his statement "our calling is only sneered at because it is not well paid. The world has no other criterion for respectability" (VI, 552). But rather than complaining, Thackeray admonished his colleagues to "be content with our status as literary craftsmen, telling the truth as far

as may be, hitting no foul blow, condescending to no servile puffery, filling not a very lofty, but a manly and honourable part" (VI, 552), nor should they consider themselves martyrs as "it requir[ed] no vast power of intellect to write most sets of words, and have them printed in a book" (VI, 557).

The social position of the literary man was one aspect in the dispute initiated by Pendennis; the other concerned the honors and awards to be bestowed on authors. Here the two newspapers disagreed. The Morning Chronicle wanted these awards abolished because they looked like charity but The Examiner supported the practice as literary men had much to offer if nominated to public positions. Thackeray's position relative to the propriety of public rewards and honors for literary men agreed with The Examiner, and he often privately expressed his approval and satisfaction on the appointment of his literary colleagues to political positions as an occasion conveying dignity to all authors.[24] Pensions from the state were acceptable; any other source gave the impression of charity, and in no way elevated the social status of authors. In "On Ribbons" in 1860, Thackeray ridiculed specially created literary awards and distinctions on the basis of their uselessness. All great authors would have been indifferent to them. Of more lasting value than awards which would neither determine fame nor posterity was a government position. Several times, he himself made application for a sinecure from the state, each time unsuccessfully.[25] A public distinction at this time would have been instrumental in solving Thackeray's dilemma in assuring him of social acceptability, and his attempts in this direction all took place between 1848 and 1855, in the midst of his new-found popularity.

Once he had developed the rationale that artists' dignity derived more from moral responsibility and personal qualities than from social rank, and had a degree of financial stability, his efforts in this direction ceased.

If Thackeray was adamant in maintaining that authors were chiefly motivated by money, he objected energetically to a charge that money alone activated the creative impulse. The Times in 1850 attacked his Christmas book The Kickleburys on the Rhine as a publication of no intrinsic value written solely to make money. Thackeray's response in the form of a preface to the second edition, "An Essay on Thunder and Small Beer," defended Christmas books as legitimate light entertainment. Reacting to the critic who felt "a gentleman writing a poor little book is a scavenger asking for a Christmas-box" (X, 224), Thackeray objected to any attention to his financial needs.

In the same year as the "Dignity of Literature" controversy, Dickens, Forster, and Bulwer founded the Guild for Literature and Art, an organization designed to provide an endowment fund for impoverished talented authors, allowing flexibility and freedom in their work. At the same time, the dignity inherent in a pension from authors to authors would "entirely change the status of the literary man in England, and make a revolution in his position, which no Government, no power on earth but his own, could ever effect."[26] Dickens' concern to improve the position of literary men was no passing fancy. In discussing his own influence, he had written Thackeray several years earlier that: "I do sometimes please myself with thinking that my success has opened the way for good writers. And of this, I am quite sure now, and hope I shall be

when I die--that in all my social doings I am mindful of this honour and dignity and always try to do something towards the quiet assertion of their right place. I am always possessed with the hope of leaving the position of literary men in England, something better and more independent than I found it" (Letters, II, 336). The money for pensions would be raised initially from the proceeds of a play written by Bulwer and performed by Dickens' acting company; later it would be augmented by public donations, while cottages for the pensioners were to be built on property donated by Bulwer. A charter was granted in Parliament in 1854 but with the accompanying restriction that all funds be frozen for seven years. Houses for pensioners were eventually dedicated in 1865, long after public interest had subsided. The demise of the Guild must partially be attributed to literary men themselves, including Carlyle and Macauley, who did not support or co-operate with the founders. Along with the fear that the Guild would be filled primarily by second-rate writers, "the plan seemed to them to have an unpleasant colouring of patronage; it suggested a slur of pauperism that both writers and artists resented."[27]

As originally conceived, the Guild would have been essentially a system of self-help "under which men engaged in literary pursuits might be as proud to receive as to give,"[28] and Dickens felt the Guild would have the influence to affect "the peace and honour of men of letters for centuries to come."[29] Because the money came from fellow writers, a pension would have an honorable distinction not always evident in government recognition. This was the essence of one side of the controversy and the intention was to provide means for elevating the social status of artists,

at the same time conferring dignity on the profession.

Thackeray, on the other hand, was one of the most vocal opponents of the Guild. Instead of disparaging the awards offered to writers by the state, he felt that a literary man warranted that kind of recognition as did other men. An author's dignity came from a moral and responsible attitude to life, accepting hardship as well as reward. Financial assistance need only be available as required and should not be in the form of permanent subsidies. Not at all deprecated, literary men were extremely well treated by English society. The Guild Thackeray thought "unworthy and derogatory to our calling. I do not like to think of our confrères painting their faces and grinning in farces, for the sake of their oppressed brethren" (Letters, III, 390). In addition to reiterating what he had previously stated in "The Dignity of Literature," Thackeray made "Authors and their Patrons" the subject of a dinner speech in 1851 before the Royal Literary Fund. "Literary men are not by any means, at this present time, that most unfortunate and most degraded set of people whom they are sometimes represented to be,"[30] were his opening remarks, and he called for the abolition of patrons, the image of oppressed literary men, and unwarranted pity. In praise of the Royal Literary Fund which acted "most wisely and justly in endeavouring to remedy, not the chronic distress, but the temporary evil,"[31] he took the occasion to emphatically oppose the Guild: "And as for any idea that our calling is despised by the world, I do, for my part, protest against and deny the whole statement. I have been in all sorts of society in this world, and I have never been despised that I know of. I don't believe there has been a literary man of the slightest merit or of the slightest mark who

did not greatly advance himself by his literary labours."[32] The phantom of the "miserable old literary hack of the time of George II,"[33] was no longer valid, "and therefore, I say, don't let us be pitied any more."[34] Further remarks were appended to the sixth lecture of The English Humourists in 1853 to the effect that authors, as other men, were required to endure life's difficulties, and were not despised by society.[35]

In what he felt at the time to be a final break from Forster, Thackeray sent him a letter "to tell Dickens and you his familiar friend, that I'm not his enemy: and I think the world is large enough for fifty such coaches as he and I drive, but--we're on different sides of the house. . . . I don't believe in the Guild of Literature I don't believe in the Theatrical scheme; I think that is against the dignity of our profession--but you are honest and clever men and free to your opinion."[36]

The opposition between Dickens and Thackeray over the Guild was only one manifestation of their differing principles of art. Dickens' concept of a literary man closely resembled Bulwer's sublime prophet and Carlyle's hero and was not sympathetic to Thackeray's satirical-moralist. He disapproved of Thackeray's parodies in Punch. "I did not admire the design," he wrote Thackeray, "but I think it is a great pity to take advantage of the means our calling gives us with such accursed readiness, of at all depreciating or vulgarizing each other--but this seems to me to be one of the main reasons why we are generally more divided among ourselves than artists who have not those means at their command" (Letters, II, 336).

There is relatively little available comment by Dickens in his private papers on Thackeray's art, but it is generally accepted that he

expressed his antagonism for Thackeray's attitude in Little Dorrit, in the portrait of Henry Gowan, a character lacking moral integrity who "appeared to be an artist by profession, and to have been at Rome sometime; yet he had a slight careless, amateur way with him--a perceptible limp, both in his devotions to art and his attainments."[37] Echoing Thackeray's pronouncements, Gowan says "What I do in my trade, I do to sell. What all we fellows do, we do to sell. If we didn't want to sell it for the most we can get for it, we shouldn't do it. Being work, it has to be done, but it's easily done. All the rest is hocus-pocus."[38]

Thackeray was much more vocal both publicly and privately in his opinions of Dickens' art, and he felt that the differences were more than matters of principle, on one occasion protesting: "He doesn't like me. He knows that my books are a protest against him--that if one set are true, the other must be false."[39] His critical opinions of Dickens were primarily based on his belief in the need for realism in fiction. Dickens' art was often a caricature of reality, and like Bulwer's was compromised by his style. Thackeray felt his style set Dickens a good example for David Copperfield's: "In the first place it pleases the other Author to see that Dickens who has long left off alluding to his the OA's works has been copying the OA, and greatly simplifying his style and foregoing the use of fine words. By this the public will be the gainer and David Copperfield will be improved by taking a lesson from Vanity Fair" (Letters, II, 531). As the two writers were frequently compared by both readers and critics, a degree of rivalry was to be expected. Writing to the critic David Masson, Thackeray explained:

> I quarrel with his Art in many respects: wh. I don't think represents Nature duly; . . . and in so far I protest against him

> . . . holding that the Art of Novels is to represent Nature: to convey as strongly as possible the sentiment of reality--in a tragedy or a poem or a lofty drama you aim at producing different emotions; the figures moving, and their words sounding, heroically: but in a drawing-room drama a coat is a coat and a poker a poker, and must be nothing else according to my ethics, not an embroidered tunic, nor a great red-hot instrument like the Pantomime weapon. (Letters, II, 772)

At the same time, he could never praise Dickens' art enough on some occasions. For instance, in "Charity and Humour," added to his lectures on The English Humourists, the last section was devoted to Dickens' wholesome attitude, his "gracious thoughts, fair fancies, soft sympathies, hearty enjoyments" (X, 626). In this lecture, Thackeray told his audience: "I may quarrel with Mr. Dickens's art a thousand and a thousand times; I delight and wonder at his genius!" (X, 628), and on occasion Thackeray paid tribute to Dickens' fertile imagination.

Although there were few direct confrontations between Dickens and Thackeray, even on the subject of the Guild, they clearly belonged to different factions, and Dickens was often drawn into the fray through associations with Thackeray's opponents. Since both Forster and Dickens were friends of Bulwer, it was natural for them to object to Punch's Prize Novelists, and Dickens' dissatisfaction has already been discussed. Forster, always alienated from Thackeray by basic personality differences, felt the parodies wrought internal division among authors. Perhaps also motivated by caricatures of himself which Thackeray often drew, Forster privately expressed in conversation to Tom Taylor that Thackeray was "false as hell" (Letters, II, 295). Informed by Taylor, Thackeray was offended and snubbed Forster in public because he felt it would be an "act of treachery on my part to shake the hand of a gentleman who formed such an opinion of me" (Letters, II, 295). As far as Dickens,

drawn in as negotiator for Forster, was concerned, the fault was Thackeray's cavalier attitude to his art for "these things arose in his jesting much too lightly between what was true and what was false and what he owed to both, and not being sufficiently steady to the former" (Letters, II, 297).

The incident was significant not for its relation to Thackeray's theory of art, but for the extreme vulnerability he displayed concerning his position as a gentleman, his honor and character, and was personal evidence to support his contention of a lack of a literary fraternity. Responsibility for the episode was neatly proportioned by Thackeray, once he was assured Forster only reflected on his literary ethics and not his private honor, in his decision "Forster ought not to have used the words: Taylor ought not to have told them: and I ought not to have taken them up" (Letters, II, 300).

The major controversy of Thackeray's life, culminating in a definite break with Dickens, took place in 1858. The instigation was an article written by Edmund Yates for Town Talk containing, as Thackeray said, "a description of my manners person & conversation and an account of my literary works wh. of course [Yates was] at liberty to praise or condemn as a literary critic" (Letters, IV, 89). What Thackeray reacted passionately to were imputations of insincerity in his conversations and dishonorable motives in his public lectures. Offended because these accusations came from an acquaintance only met at a club and because he felt they attacked his position of literary man and gentleman, he felt "obliged to take notice of articles wh. I consider to be, not offensive & unfriendly merely, but slanderous and untrue" (Letters, IV, 90), in

a letter to Yates. Confronted by this response stating that "any question of [Thackeray's] personal truth & sincerity [was] quite out of the province of [his] criticism," Yates turned to Dickens for advice. Injured himself by what he felt were injudicious remarks by Thackeray on his own marital affairs, Dickens was not inclined to be gentle. Counselling Yates that no apology could possibly follow a letter of that nature, he helped draft a reply, accusing Thackeray himself of "slanderous and untrue" remarks which in turn caused Thackeray to place the matter in the hands of the Garrick Club of which all three were members, and where Thackeray supposed that Yates had overheard the conversations to which he objected. In the ensuing course of events, the Garrick ruled that Yates should apologize or be stricken from the membership, a situation made increasingly difficult by the fact that neither Dickens nor Yates would accept the jurisdiction of a literary club in what they took to be a private quarrel. As a friend of Yates, Dickens, angered by Thackeray's personal remarks, became so deeply involved that Thackeray felt his quarrel was with Dickens who was using Yates: "There's my rival, Stab him now, Yates--and the poor young man thrusts out his unlucky paw,"[40] and not with Yates at all. Never altering his position through all the debate and publicity, Thackeray maintained "not one of them seems to understand that to be accused of hypocrisy of base motives for public & private conduct & so forth--are the points wh. make me angry" (Letters, IV, 134). After the affair had been ostensibly settled by the Garrick, and Yates had been forcibly ejected, Thackeray regretted the whole incident: "What pains me most is that Dickens should have been his adviser: and next that I should have had to lay a heavy hand on a young man who,

I take it, has been cruelly punished by the issue of the affair, and I believe is hardly aware of the nature of his own offence, and doesnt even now understand that a gentleman should resent the monstrous insult wh. he volunteered" (Letters, IV, 133-34).

This affair caused what seemed an irreparable alienation and as late as 1861 Thackeray recounted: "Dickens & I shook hands and didn't say one single word to each other. And if he read my feelings on my face as such a clever fellow would he knows now that I have found him out" (Letters, IV, 238). With Forster, the situation differed slightly although his sympathies naturally lay with Dickens and Yates; he cut Thackeray publicly, responding to what he took to be references to himself in one of the Roundabout Papers, but the two continued to exchange amicable letters. The rupture with Dickens persisted until 1863 when they were reconciled at Thackeray's instigation.[41]

That Dickens and Thackeray never understood each other is evident in the obituary by Dickens in The Cornhill where he wrote "I thought he too much feigned a want of earnestness, and that he made a pretence of undervaluing his art, which was not good for the art that he held in trust."[42]

Any pretense of undervaluing his art was more than balanced by the seriousness with which Thackeray examined the artist's literary and moral responsibility, and his social position. His original position that authors be accurate social historians concerned with facts and truth developed into a position of the author as parson, functioning, through literature, as a strong moral force. Further modification led him to a final stage where the moral responsibility was confined within

the existing limits of decorum. But even then, he was ever uneasy that literary men could demand any kind of respect, especially when so many were intellectually or creatively deficient, and his insistence that the literary community was well received by society exposed his private fears.

The dignity of literary men was part of a larger concern for the proper definition of the Victorian gentleman. Thackeray believed that the middle class did not understand the true qualities of a gentleman, that rank and birth should be used only to acquire or support the virtues of honesty and affection, and that these qualities could still exist in the absence of wealth. In the conflicting position of being, on the one hand, a gentleman, and on the other, a literary man, he was confronted by the problem of reconciliation; this he sought to do by incorporating the two. His controversies were not about art at all but about the position of the artist as gentleman, and they became progressively more public, culminating in the quarrel with Yates. Thackeray's sensitivity each time was either for his personal claim as a gentleman or for the dignity of the class as a whole. The difference between these incidents and his earlier attacks on Bulwer, as Thackeray explained it, depended upon the kind of remark made. His criticism of Bulwer had been primarily literary, although he couldn't deny the personal aspects; and literary works, once published, were fair game for critics.

One of his principal objections to contemporary literature was that it led attention away from society and presented glamorized versions of life. Art, in Thackeray's view, did not improve nature and was more apt to pervert it. The great instructive value of art derived from its truthful presentation of reality; nature with its vices and evils exposed

as well as its virtues. Although Thackeray objected to didactic literature or works with an explicit moral, he firmly believed the responsibility of the artist was to improve public taste and manners. Because he felt artists should work from their own experience, he depicted, in Pendennis and The Newcomes, the upper register of society he knew well. The novels examined all these aspects of art and the experiences of the artist attempting to understand his art.

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THE HISTORY

OF

PENDENNIS.

HIS FORTUNES AND MISFORTUNES,

HIS FRIENDS AND HIS GREATEST ENEMY.

BY

W. M. THACKERAY,

Author of "Vanity Fair," the "Snob Papers" in Punch, &c. &c.

LONDON: BRADBURY & EVANS, 11, BOUVERIE STREET.

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PENDENNIS

In Pendennis, Thackeray presents the literary artist in Victorian society. His struggles to achieve honesty in art which can only derive from honesty in life, his growth as a realistic artist, constitute the central interests of the book. From that foundation the book expands into an examination of the complex relationship between truth and artifice, reality and illusion in life, an aspect discussed by Juliet McMaster in Thackeray the Major Novels.[1] Because middle-class Victorian England is based on materialistic values and a worship of rank and wealth, it has suppressed or perverted spontaneous affections and honesty. Survival in this world of Vanity Fair requires that characters become artists to a degree, and shape or control life according to the demands of their artificial values. Contrasted to these bad artists who turn away from nature is Pendennis, a literary artist, whose duty it is to expose the artificiality of life and lead the way back to truth through his art. Thackeray examines artistic and human affectation through two kinds of artistic figures, Pendennis, a writer, and Clive, a painter, but the essential struggle remains the same.

Art by necessity cannot be real although it may be realistic and reflect life; therefore, a novel must present an illusion of life. But the fictional forms which Thackeray chooses militate against that illusion--one is autobiography, the other history. Juxtaposed against the realistic qualities of Thackeray's novels are the constant reminders that the characters are just that, characters, manipulated by an author,

responding artificially to their experiences within the boundaries of literary conventions, dramatic interludes, fable and fairy tale motifs. At the same time, he uses a knowledgeable narrator who understands how illusions often contaminate or corrupt reality. The characters, lacking the narrator's knowledge, usually remain unaware of the conventional qualities of their lives and movements, and mistakenly believe they imitate something of value and substance. By placing the poetic conventions within a realistic context, Thackeray reveals the characters' behavior to be both artificial at the moment and conventional, part of a larger recurring cycle of human experience. Characters pattern their responses on art forms because, as Barbara Hardy says in The Exposure of Luxury,[2] their performance on this level is more profitable than a natural one would be. Eventually, art may even take control, and the tensions of the novel occur between Thackeray's realistic world and his purely fictional one. His interest in literary conventions, his early parodies, and his satiric use of these conventions in his mature narrative style are all examined by Loofbourow in Thackeray and the Form of Fiction.

Wheatley, in Patterns in Thackeray's Fiction,[3] maintains that Thackeray's great subject in Pendennis and later in The Newcomes is the relation of self to form and the relation of form to life. Life here is the realistic world of the novels and forms may either be a subjective projection of order onto life, usually for profit or delight, or a formalized literary convention. Pendennis is a character shaped by these forms; some are inflicted by other characters, some are self-imposed, and his maturation is a process of understanding and recognizing the forms; the second step, because he is a writer, is to express that truth

honestly in his art.

Each artificial pose, whether Prince of Fairoaks, romantic lover, disillusioned swain or worldly sophisticate, contributes to Pen's maturation as an artist; and although there is of necessity a time lag, the stages of his art parallel the stages of his life. His ability to write functions as a cathartic or as a means of assimilation of his experience. Only after he has expressed himself in artistic form, which in turn is shaped by various conventions, can he judge experience. Pen's attempts to come to terms with reality, to honestly discern and separate it from artifice, give him stature as a man and as an artist.

In the world of London and Clavering St. Mary, characters struggle to control satisfactorily a fallen world; in order to control it, they strive to shape and create a new reality using the various means of money, social position, or love. But the ultimate result of using art as a means of coping with life is the construction of a society based on artificial values. This misuse of art Thackeray treats as a debilitating disease which attacks those values he honors, truth and honesty; the artificiality impedes affection for almost all the characters of the book, from Pen's father with his practised and memorized proposal to Helen at the beginning, to Blanche's treatment of Harry Foker at the end. In such a world where response to life is so artificial as to be itself another art form, in a moral vacuum where characters are dominated by a universal quest for rank and wealth, Thackeray shows that salvation lies only with those who through a correct use of art can illuminate the way to wisdom and truth.

Art, then, is the substance of Pendennis, but it is art with many connotations. First of all, it is the fictions of characters who attempt to create their own realities which impinge upon Pen; it is Pen's personal relation to literary conventions which program his emotional behavior; and, finally, it is the art of his own literary expressions.

The tendency of individuals to create a new reality, whether from rejection of or dissatisfaction with life, forms the background of Pen's youth. If a firm grasp of the past is necessary to know reality in the present, those characters who quest for truth are further obstructed because the past is recreated to suit the present. This is true to a certain extent in Pendennis, and becomes a central issue in The Newcomes. In Pen's case, the immediate past of his father as an apothecary is obliterated in favor of the more illustrious past of the Pendennis line, by the false Pendennis arms the Major wears on his ring, and by the obscure portraits hanging around the dining table at Fairoaks. Pen accepts unquestioningly any fact handed to him, to the point of believing one of his ancestors was involved in signing the Magna Carta, and another aided Richard II to invade Ireland. Helen Pendennis perpetuates this idea by raising Pen as a prince, a fantasy he readily accepts, and from his earliest childhood, Pen operates within this romantic convention. Because Helen could not control her own past, she intends to shape Pen's present and his future, in accordance with the convention. Thwarted in marrying her first love, Helen accepts John Pendennis and although she cannot love her husband does venerate and honor him; but she keeps a lock of Francis Bell's hair in her desk and, as guardian of

his orphan child, sees an opportunity to fulfill her disappointed dream through her.

> She had made up her mind that he was to marry little Laura: she would be eighteen when Pen was six-and-twenty, and had finished his college career; and had made his grand tour; and had settled either in London, astonishing all the metropolis by his learning and eloquence at the bar, or better still in a sweet country parsonage surrounded with hollyhocks and roses, close to a delightful romantic ivy-covered church, from the pulpit of which Pen would utter the most beautiful sermons ever preached. (36)[4]

Francis Bell had been a clergyman, too, and while her scheme is a neat sentimental plan, it in no way takes account either of Pen's abilities or inclinations.

Antithetical to Helen stands Major Pendennis intending Pen for a sophisticated life in society. It would be Pen's responsibility to restore the family to its former social eminence, but the Major consults Pen's preferences no more than Helen does. The principal dichotomy of the book derives from these alternative ways of responding to reality: the sentimental, symbolized by Helen, and the cynical manner of the Major. The tension is reflected in Pen's life, in his love affairs, and in his art.

Pen grows up nourishing the ideal of being a gentleman, an ambition supported by both mother and uncle, although initially it is an ideal of power by virtue of wealth and rank. But Pen's position is nebulous for several reasons; his fortune is very modest, his father was still only an apothecary, and although Pen expects to "reign" at his father's demise, he has very little power. In his uncle, he has a fine example of the type of gentleman so popular in the Regency and still enjoying esteem, and Pen as a young man becomes quite the dandy himself.

His set responses in thinking his behavior and position as a gentleman are unassailable reveal his pretentiousness and provide the only slapstick of the book: for instance, his encounters with Samuel Huxter and Mirabolant. However, his pose is successful much of the time, especially at college. A shift of values takes place throughout the book as the role of gentleman changes from essentially a passive acceptance of respect demanded by rank to an active earning of the regard of others by good and honest behavior, a change from external to internal qualities. Because Pen needs an outlet for his role as gentleman, a role reinforced but also restricted by Helen, he attempts to prove his position to himself by becoming a lover; romance provides an escape from the reality of his existence as merely the son of Helen.

He has three major love affairs, with Emily Costigan, Blanche Amory, and Laura Bell. Fanny Bolton falls somewhere between Blanche and Emily in significance. In his affairs with Emily and Fanny, he is the romantic lover; with Blanche, the pastoral swain; with Laura, and Blanche for a while, the tired sophisticate. Pen's behavior is stereotyped until his resolution with Laura, when his emerging self-awareness enables him to perceive the sham and artifice of his poses. His first attempt at love is a natural extension of his life as Prince of Fairoaks, a conscious concern for his role as a gentleman. Pen fashions an existence for himself as a combination fairy-tale prince and romantic lover, just as an artist creates a plot for characters in a novel. From his study of the poets, Pen learns that love is the main pleasure and business of youth and accordingly begins "to feel the necessity of a first love--of a consuming passion--of an object on which he could concentrate all

those vague floating fancies under which he sweetly suffered--of a young lady to whom he could really make verses, and whom he could set up and adore" (32). In the absence of such a creature, Pen takes to writing poems choosing "passages suitable to his complaint from Waller, Dryden, Prior, and the like" (33) which he allows to be printed in the Country Chronicle. Longing to give his heart away and prevented only "because there was nobody at hand to fall in love with" (35), Pen takes his quest for love on frantic rides throughout the countryside, peering into carriages, but "do as he might, and ride where he would, the fairy princess whom he was to rescue and win had not yet appeared to honest Pen" (35). The seriousness of his quest is ironically undercut by his earliest encounter, "a snuffy old dowager of seventy" (35). He is extremely ripe then for a suitable candidate discovered in Emily Costigan, an actress known as the Fotheringay. To emphasize the difference between Pen's illusion and the reality even before the Fotheringay appears, Thackeray comments on her later loss of beauty, her bad teeth, her big feet. The opposite physical attributes are usually necessary to a romantic heroine, but Pen's immediate response is "something overwhelming, maddening, delicious; a fever of wild joy and undefined longing" (49). But even here Pen's total reaction is not immediate, and only following a sound sleep does he feel "as much in love as the best hero in the best romance he ever read" (50).

On first meeting Emily, Pen is overwhelmed and his delusion assumes a comic note as he misconstrues her conversational and intellectual talents, neither of much strength. "How rude it was of me to begin to talk about professional matters, and how well she turned

the conversation" (66), Pen reflects after the first meeting as, consciously or subconsciously, he chooses to fashion his own version of what occurred; "he supplied the meaning which her words wanted; and created the divinity which he loved" (67). The irony of his ecstasy is clearly evident in view of what actually occurred on that first meeting although the emotions inspired by his illusions are indeed genuine. Emily's only function in the relationship is "to appear as if she understood what Pen talked" (71), a totally passive role, while Pen imaginatively creates what is needed to satisfy him. Her real personality is irrelevant, and, in fact, the situation demands it be so; otherwise, the convention could not be maintained easily. Pen can no longer differentiate between appearance and reality, and creates virtues for Emily which she does not possess, failing to see those she does--her simplicity and good sense. Euphoric from "that charming fever--that delicious longing--and fire, and uncertainty; he hugged them to him--he would not have lost them for all the world" (68), Pen, "blind with love and infatuation" (78), is juxtaposed to Emily "whose eyes were perfectly wide open" (78). Although she is an actress who maintains the stage mannerisms taught by Bowes in her private life and in fact no longer knows they are mannerisms, Emily has no comprehension of the level of Pen's illusions and passions, and as Thackeray understates, "she cannot justly be called a romantic person" (141). Operating on a concrete level, she fails to understand any imaginative expression, even reducing Hamlet to the person of Bingley, her manager. Never at any time does Emily entertain illusions about the affair, nor are her emotions at all aroused for Pen; she can with equanimity think of boiled mutton or dresses while

Pen romantically woos her. Pen, in his letter, told the Major he "had never dreamed of love until [he] saw her" (5) which further emphasizes his blindness to the stylized pattern of his behavior, especially when set against the elaborate preparations for his first love.

With the artificiality of Pen's affair already compromised by the truth, Thackeray introduces Major Pendennis who not only serves as a contrast to Pen's illusions but inevitably destroys them. Against Pen's blind fascination is the worldliness of the Major, judging Emily by the down-to-earth standards of handwriting and spelling, finding it inconceivable that Pen would want to marry "a woman who spells affection with one f" (151). Under his influence, his constant references to Pen's lost chances in society, Pen perceives the difficulties created by his attachment. To sustain the illusion, these must be overcome by love, even though he begins "dimly to perceive that the action on which he had prided himself as the most romantic, generous instance of disinterested affection, was perhaps a very selfish and headstrong piece of folly" (101). Yet, any conscious acknowledgement of this insight would shatter the illusion which still fits neatly with his conception of himself as gentleman and romantic lover. It takes determination to continue worship of an idol whom he confesses to the Major is not clever nor accomplished but only of "a very good average intellect" (110), still an overestimation, and urged by the Major, Pen soon begins to see that he is indeed sacrificing himself to maintain his illusion, and that the illusion itself is of less value than he thought. The constant impinging of the Major's version of reality forces Pen to give up his creation, but it is only time which eventually removes the illusion, not

the renunciation.

The subterfuge of the Major is ultimately successful because he plays on Pen's pretensions as a gentleman and his susceptibility to what he is told. That Pen has little power of discernment is fully evident in his capitulation to the tales of Captain Costigan who "was not only unaccustomed to tell the truth--he was unable even to think it--and fact and fiction reeled together in his muzzy, whiskified brain" (59). The pose of the captain as a gentleman of worthy ancestors differs only in degree, not kind, from those of the Major himself, and for a time he even condescends to the Major on the matter of social eminence, waiving any objection to an apothecary attachment "in consideration of the known respectability of your family" (131). Pen at this time is impressionable, "it had not yet entered into the boy's head to disbelieve any statement that was made to him; and being of a candid nature himself, he took naturally for truth what other people told him" (61), and begins to sympathize with and accept the Major's version of life, circumscribed by Debretts' Peerage.

In contrast to Pen's energies, Emily has been coolly detached throughout the affair, her feelings never really involved. At the termination, she wraps up "Pen's letters, poems, passions, and fancies, and tied them with a piece of string neatly, as she would a parcel of sugar. . . . Nor was she in the least moved while performing this act. . . . She tied them up like so much grocery, and sat down and made tea afterwards with a perfectly placid and contented heart: while Pen was yearning after her ten miles off: and hugging her image to his soul" (143).

Much of Pen's life is involved with art, either as it exerts its influences upon his impressionable mind or as he imaginatively responds to the life he has created. Treated as a prince and a knight by his mother, it is no wonder his first reaction is to embrace romantic literature. As he reads authors of romantic convention, he extends the framework to encompass his own life. Throughout this and subsequent affairs, Pen's habit is to express himself through his writing which usually has an exact correlation to the particular influence of the moment. Thus, even before his infatuation with Emily he publishes verses in the 'Poet's Corner' of the Country Chronicle, considering himself to be "filled with quite a Byronic afflatus" (31). After his declaration to Helen of his romantic intentions toward Emily, his imaginative fever reaches a crisis. Late at night she finds him:

> . . . biting a pencil and thinking of rhymes and all sorts of follies and passions. He was Hamlet jumping into Ophelia's grave: he was the Stranger taking Mrs. Haller into his arms, beautiful Mrs. Haller, with the raven ringlets falling over her shoulders. Despair and Byron, Thomas Moore and all the Loves of the Angels, Waller and Herrick, Béranger and all the love-songs he had ever read, were working and seething in this young gentleman's mind, and he was at the very height and paroxysm of the imaginative frenzy. (88)

Pen's rewards for such artificial but sincere efforts are three meagre letters which the Major discovers were never written by Emily at all.

After the Major engineers the removal of the Fotheringay, Pen continues to utilize his art to cope with separation from his illusion, composing "a number of poems suitable to his circumstances--over which verses he blushed in after-days, wondering how he could ever have invented such rubbish. . . . Suffice it to say, he wrote poems and relieved himself very much" (167). Thackeray undercuts the agony of these last

compositions by reference to the setting, under a specific tree by the Brawl, and to future uses of this tree.

A student at Oxbridge, Pen sees the affair in a manner similar to his uncle's and his reaction is one of indignation: "The mist of passion had passed from his eyes now, and he saw her as she was. To think that he, Pendennis, had been enslaved by such a woman; and then jilted by her!" (209). Turning the event to his social advantage through poetry, he finds himself elevated in the opinion of his peers and crassly passes around his poetic compositions. His experience gives him an heroic dimension: "The verses were copied out, handed about, sneered at, admired, passed from coterie to coterie. There are few things which elevate a lad in the estimation of his brother boys, more than to have a character for a great and romantic passion" (217).

Only when Pen journeys to London to see Emily perform there does he bury the illusion: "She was not less handsome, but she was not the same, somehow. The light was gone out of her eyes which used to flash there, or Pen's no longer were dazzled by it" (233). The latter is of course the case and Pen realizes it too, for "he felt that it was in another life almost, that it was another man who had so madly loved her" (233). His eyes are now wide awake too, although Thackeray admits "delusion is better than the truth sometimes, and fine dreams than dismal waking" (234). Never again are Pen's energies and emotions engaged to the same degree.

With the loss of his first romantic illusion also disappears for a time the great influence of Helen. Ever ready to reinforce his sentimental notions and behavior, however much it may not have been part of

her predetermined plan for him, she relinquishes her power on his entrance to university. For the next phase in the life of Pendennis, the Major provides the guiding light with plans designed to destroy Pen's earlier inclinations.

However successful socially in his role as a gentleman at Oxbridge, Pen's literary efforts receive no such recognition. Most of his time is expended in following the gods of the Major and posing as a wealthy gentleman. When plucked, his personal shame is far greater than any guilt feeling toward his mother, a feeling reinforced by the Major's rejection of him; and the pose he strikes at Fairoaks as a disillusioned man is another means of withdrawal from reality.

The Fotheringay affair is Pen's excursion into the sentimental, romantic world; his next adventure faces the opposite direction in emotional values; in fact, emotion is replaced by form altogether. While Pen fashions the illusion surrounding Emily, that of Blanche Amory is created by herself. Like Fanny later and like Pen, she has had a course in sentimental fiction, from which she creates a pose of romantic heroine. In this love affair, Thackeray highlights the artificiality of the relationship against the background of the pastoral convention, and as the relationship between Pen and Blanche progresses, the setting becomes more stylized and removed from reality.

Thackeray has prepared for the change from the romantic to pastoral forms long before the appearance of Blanche. Under the sentimental influence of Helen, Pen's surroundings are romantic.

> At sunset, from the lawn of Fairoaks, there was a pretty sight; it and the opposite park of Clavering were in the habit of putting on a rich golden tinge, which became them both wonderfully. The upper windows of the great

> house flamed so as to make your eyes wink; the little river ran off noisily westward, and was lost in a sombre wood, behind which the towers of the old abbey church of Clavering . . . rose up in purple splendour. (13)

Thereafter, scenic description is rare until the conclusion of Pen's affair when attention is again turned to the district. But now, even though "the rapid and shining Brawl," the woods of Clavering Park, and the church appear to be cheery and attractive, on closer examination "the town, so cheerful of aspect a few furlongs off, looks very bland and dreary" (168). The illusion has been destroyed by close examination.

Into this setting is introduced the poetess Blanche, usually dressed in white or grey, with all the physical attributes of the stereotyped romantic heroine. "It appeared from these poems" in her private book Mes Larmes "that the young creature had indeed suffered prodigiously" (281), but like Clavering St. Mary, appearance proves to be misleading. Having changed even her name from the more mundane Betsy, she creates a total existence for herself as a suffering martyr and can see life only in romantic terms. However, her romanticism is discredited immediately by her personal cruelty to her family. From the very beginning, her relation to Pendennis operates within the pastoral convention; their first private meetings occur by the Brawl while Pen fishes, this time for Blanche; and the tree, witness to his agony for Emily, becomes a repository for billet-doux "crumpled and rather stained with green" (304).

Before Pen had embarked on that first affair, he had been emotionally primed by Helen and so saw himself as a young prince; now having proven so well to being his uncle's prodigy, ashamed of being plucked, his position at Fairoaks as the prodigal son is an

uncomfortable one, again under Helen's control. So it is that when Blanche appears, he is emotionally ready for an attachment. Casting aside his tragedies and gloomy verses, Pen responds to Blanche's poems, Mes Larmes, with "very violent and passionate, very hot, sweet, and strong" (281) verses and also with recycled poems originally composed for the Fotheringay.

In this first stage of their affair, neither lover is deeply involved although Pen is affronted when Blanche abandons the charade and tells him "it was only play" (309). At the fear of defeat, he "felt almost tragical and romantic again, as in his first affair of the heart" (308) and increases his ardor. To boost his own ego and because it will fulfill Helen's plan, Pen turns to the idea of marrying Laura, a decision given more impetus by her elusiveness at Lady Rockminster's ball. Believing himself to be performing a great personal sacrifice, he adopts the pose of a melancholy disillusioned man, a mood which he persists in assuming until the end of the novel. His proposal, so pretentious as to be ludicrous, "I am but very young as yet; but I have had so many pains and disappointments, that I am old and weary. . . . I have not my first love to give you. I am a broken man" (344-45), elicits the refusal from Laura it deserves. Pen falls gradually into the Major's camp and he becomes the worldly sophisticate on resuming the affair with Blanche in London, and consciously enters her world of illusion.

The setting this time is Lady Clavering's urban house where the drawing-rooms parody the pastoral setting at Clavering with flowered carpets, Dresden shepherds and shepherdesses, porcelain animals, nymphs and birds, all eminently chaste, but where the chairs cannot support

Lady Clavering. The simplicity of the country setting has been perverted by superfluity of decoration. Pen in his role as man about town does not suit Blanche who likes "Arthur Pendennis of the country best" (513) where he is willing to play her game. Pen will still play, but for him the stakes have changed. Recognizing her deficiencies, Pendennis chooses to marry "for prudence and for establishment" (582) and allows the Major to enter negotiations, but even Harry Foker can see his reasons are false. Marriage for Pen would not fulfill his wildest emotions as he imagined with Emily, nor would it be a noble gentlemanly self-sacrifice as with Laura, but an expedient step in his social career. As he tells the Major, "the period of my little illusions is over" (558), and he later admits to Foker: "I like her well enough. She's pretty enough; she's clever enough. I think she'll do very well. And she has got money enough--that's the great point" (582). In college, Pen prides himself on his reputation as a romantic lover; now he revels in his posture of the sophisticated practical man, and he tells Warrington:

> I was in love so fiercely in my youth, that I have burned out that flame for ever, I think; and if ever I marry, it will be a marriage of reason that I will make, with a well-bred, good-tempered, good-looking person who has a little money, and so forth, that will cushion our carriage in its course through life. As for romance, it is all done; I have spent that out, and am old before my time--I'm proud of it.(588)

The affair with Blanche is a long drawn out one interrupted by Pen's flirtation with Fanny, his illness, the trip abroad and Helen's death. When it is renewed, Pendennis is ready to compromise on the matter of a wife and a seat in Parliament. Although their interchanges still are controlled by the pastoral convention: "Here were two battered London rakes, taking themselves in for a moment, and fancying that they

were in love with each other, like Phillis and Corydon" (826), Pendennis tries to destroy the illusion in a blunt avowal of his position: "But if I don't set you up as a heroine, neither do I offer you your humble servant as a hero. But I think you are--well, there, I think you are very sufficiently good-looking" (837). He is quite ruthless with Blanche who cannot accept this basis for a relationship. "Do you want me to come wooing in a Prince Prettyman's dress, from the masquarade warehouse," he asks, "and to pay you compliments like Sir Charles Grandison? Do you want me to make you verses as in the days when we were--when we were children? I will if you like and sell them to Bacon and Bungay afterwards" (838). This, of course, is exactly what Blanche does want, and exactly the kind of verses Pen willingly wrote for Emily. Blanche cannot cope with the possibility of a lover who does not perform by the code, so Pen's solution is to cold-heartedly send her verses and boxes of bonbons. In Barbara Hardy's terms, Pen consciously exchanges heart for art, genuine emotion for pretense. At no time, however, does he really succumb to the illusion of Blanche or the Major; he does not "pretend to be a believer in the creed to which he was ready to swear" (839). But before Pen can acquiesce to Blanche's artifice, he must make a personal adjustment and along with his pose of the disillusioned lover become a sceptic. In adopting the position that deceit and hypocrisy are necessary to life, and that he will accept them without emotion, Pen fails to see there is deceit in his own pose. But in such a position of relativity which acknowledges truth on both sides of the question, he can accept his uncle's values, although in doing so, he becomes a moral coward withdrawing his judgement from life. Without judgement, it is

impossible to respond honestly, a paralyzed state which persists until reunion with Laura.

On his discovery of the connection of Altamont and Clavering and the Major's blackmail, Pen honestly stands by his former promise in informing Blanche of their altered expectations. Her answer, couched in the usual sentimental terms, tells him nothing. Blanche once complains to the Major "there is no romance in the world now, no real affection" (566), mistakenly equating the two. What she really wants is the romance. She cannot recognize the "real affection" which Foker offers and soon wearies of him. Blanche reveals a certain degree of self-knowledge in her refusal of Pen: "If I cannot have emotions, I must have the world. You would offer me neither one nor the other" (938). For all his posture of sophistication, Pen has seen non-existent qualities in Blanche as in Emily. Only after her defection to Foker does he clearly see that she has "a sham enthusiasm, a sham hatred, a sham love, a sham taste, a sham grief, each of which flared and shone very vehemently for an instant, but subsided and gave way to the next sham emotion" (939).

The love affair with Blanche Amory forms the boundaries for Pen, the worldly sceptic, and also for Pen, the professional literary man. His sentimental love poems and letters to Blanche are in the romantic style, used with Emily, but this time he is one step further removed from truth without any emotional involvement; nor does Blanche perhaps ever expect any, the illusion is sufficient for her. But false as his efforts are, Pen still believes, often mistakenly, in his talent as a poet; it is Warrington who enlightens him on that score, with such deflating descriptions of his poems as "mawkish and disgusting . . . pompous

and feeble" (395).

Pendennis, for economic reasons, joins the literary profession, and Thackeray, although repudiated by his colleagues, presents what he believes to be a valid description of the literary community. Within this world of Shandon, Warrington, Bludyer, Percy Popjoy, Bacon and Bungay, Wagg and Wenham, Thackeray has tried to expose some of the humbug of the profession and explores aspects crucial to the artist: the dignity of the profession, the value of literary men, and the value of the art they produce. It has been well established that Thackeray often took his models from personal experience. Bacon and Bungay, the equally ignorant publishers, are portraits of Richard Bentley and Henry Colborn. Bentley was a publisher of poetry annuals which Thackeray criticized, and Colborn published silver-fork novels. Wagg, first introduced in Vanity Fair as a follower of Lord Steyne, is Thackeray's rendition of Theodore Hook, a successful author of fashionable novels which Thackeray himself often reviewed. Percy Popjoy is an aristocratic poet of no talent or intellect, but is lionized for his social position. The general lack of integrity of the profession is a constant theme; Hoolan and Doolan, the best of friends, attack each other in rival newspapers and are directed by the political stances of the newspapers, as are most of their colleagues.

That literary men, especially journalists,were unacceptable socially in Victorian England is exemplified by the fashionable Major, who "thought any notice of Mr. Pen and his newspaper connexions quite below his dignity as a major and a gentleman" (443). Even when Pendennis achieves success, the Major cannot accept it in literary terms but translates it into monetary and social terms: "Dammy, he may go on

spinning his nonsense for the next four or five years, and make a fortune. In the meantime, I should wish him to live properly, take respectable apartments, and keep a brougham" (527).

Thackeray feels that disregard for the literary profession stems from the behavior and attitudes of some of its members. Shandon, supposedly based on Maginn,[5] neglects wife and children for drinking cronies, but Thackeray, through the mouthpiece of Warrington, adamantly refuses to allow literary genius to excuse dissoluteness. Shandon also personifies the cynicism and lack of conviction Thackeray sees in this faction of the literary world; he "would write on any side, and attack himself or another man with equal indifference" (404). The hypocrisy of the profession is evident in the position of Shandon in prison composing the prospectus of the Pall Mall Gazette, "written by gentlemen for gentlemen; its conductors speak to the classes in which they live and were born" (410), but which can scarcely boast of a gentleman among the ranks. The Bungay's dinner party, further ammunition for Thackeray's adversaries, collects together representative members: publishers ignorant of literature and influenced by wives, socially ambitious tufthunters, illiterate nobility, hack writers who do most of the work. Pen's own success depends in large part on his west-end connections, and he is "considered to be a gentleman of good present means and better expectations, who wrote for his pleasure, than which there cannot be a greater recommendation to a young literary aspirant" (452). It would be a social disgrace for a gentleman to admit he wrote for bread. Thackeray's insistence that this was a valid motivation reflects both his position that economic gain does not negate creativity and his

attitude of the redefined gentleman who can earn a living without loss of personal dignity. Set against this milieu are Warrington and honest Miss Bunion, the genuine sentimental poetess, the antithesis of Blanche. Warrington is close to Thackeray's concept of an ideal writer--one without illusions either of his own work or of the literary community, and who writes honestly without pretension, although he too has some hesitation in admitting his vocation.

Such portraits as these evoked the wrath of Thackeray's colleagues who felt he was deprecating his own profession. Instead, Thackeray intended to rid the profession of misconceptions fostered from within which gave a false impression of importance. Most writers were literary hacks and, rather than given special consideration, should be held responsible for their actions.

While Pen calls himself a "professional writer," Warrington's term is "literary hack." The chasm which he perceives between that sort of work and true artistic genius is immense. Warrington shatters many of Pen's illusions, not only about the profession, but about his own art. Pen is hindered in his judgement of his work because he cannot separate honest art from the pretentious, and it is Warrington's estimation that Pen's talents are not ethereal as he would like, but in the range of magazine articles and light verses. However, Pen believes his sentimental poems have some value and they do in fact coincide with the public taste. His professional initiation appears in the Spring Annual, an example of a literary genre which Thackeray abhorred and had attacked as early as 1837: "Such a display of miserable mediocrity, such a collection of feeble verse, such a gathering of small wit is hardly to

be found in any other series . . . a little sham sentiment is employed to illustrate a little sham art" (II, 337-38). From this highly artificial form, Pen moves to criticism, and in fact, becomes an honest critic, devoting himself to the exposure of sham in others' work, employing a perspective which he as yet lacks on his own. The antithesis to indiscriminate praise which provided one extreme of criticism appears in the form of Bludyer, a critic of the "smashing" variety, who "having cut up the volume to his heart's content, went and sold it at a bookstall, and purchased a pint of brandy with the proceeds of the volume" (449). Although Pen is flippant and unhesitating in his judgements, yet he is an impartial reviewer, with a sense of humor and justice, attributes not usually apparent in criticism; and he even breaks precedent by praising a book of the rival Bacon much to the dismay of Shandon. All aspects of journalism militate against Pen's romantic naive belief that a critical journal is designed to tell the truth and is not ruled by political and social sympathies, but Pen clearly echoes Thackeray in his statement "one can't tell all the truth, I suppose; but one can tell nothing but the truth" (446). Shandon fully believes, however, that Pen will eventually become partisan too, and become contaminated by the profession.

The problem is that Pen does not or cannot transpose this differentiation of truth and illusion to his imaginative art, or even to his life. In having Pen consciously strive to tell the truth in his critical writing, Thackeray shows how difficult it is to satisfy those demands in fiction. All of Pen's imaginative work has remained on a sentimental level parallelling the sentimental period of his life; his art lags behind his life for it is dependent upon his experiences. In basing his literary art upon his life, Pen both recognizes and admits

the degree of his dependence upon role-playing. Nevertheless, he violates his intention of telling "nothing but the truth" by publishing his novel after he realizes its artificial basis. An element of truth persists, however, for some emotions in the book are genuine.

Leaves from the Lifebook of Walter Lorraine "would never have been written but for Arthur Pendennis's own private griefs and follies" (521). The biography, composed "under the influence of his youthful embarrassments, amatory and pecuniary, was of a very fierce, gloomy, and passionate sort--the Byronic despair, the Wertherian despondency, the mocking bitterness of Mephistopheles of Faust, were all reproduced and developed in the character of the hero" (517). The book is a prose rendition in the form of a fashionable novel of all the sentimental illusions Pen formerly held as truths. Taking advantage of the current market, he publishes it although fully aware parts of it are pompous and weak; the first volume puts him to sleep, and the one paragraph revealed to us has all the ingredients of a passage in Eugene Aram of the kind Thackeray delighted in lampooning. What Pen fails to discern is that it is still an artificial art form, whose only truth resides in his emotional response to Emily. Pendennis is, as Warrington sees, a humbug, an opinion reinforced even more by his histrionic gesture of flinging his manuscript on a cold fireplace. According to Pen, authors should utilize their talents by revealing to the public their versions of experience; Warrington believes the opposite: "All poets are humbugs, all literary men are humbugs; directly a man begins to sell his feelings for money he is a humbug" (520). Art by necessity contains an element of humbug and artifice, and the problem ultimately becomes one

of proportion. Because Pen has styled both his life and art on literary conventions, both are fictions.

Pen's progress as a gentleman parallels his artistic and personal development. Eager for his first affair, he shuns the local girls as one "too high-minded for a vulgar intrigue, and at the idea of a seduction, had he ever entertained it, his heart would have revolted" (35). The fact that Emily is of low connections is no obstacle for Pen, once trapped by romantic convention, and it is further proof of his position as gentleman that he refuses to end the relationship. His chaste romantic passions substitute for sexual indulgence which could have been more easily tolerated by Major Pendennis. But it is also his Achilles heel as the Major plays very nicely on the rather foggy background of the Pendennis family and Pen's pretensions as a young lord. Popularity at college, out of all proportion to his birth and finances, only reinforces his pose so that he becomes his uncle's man--to the point of objecting to Blanche's birth as not quite good enough for a Pendennis. His episode with Fanny is important more for his development as a gentleman than for any other theme in the book although she momentarily replaces the pastoral Blanche in her "Shepherd's Inn," but here Pen is the complete man about town, not so adverse to a "vulgar intrigue" which he would have shunned at one time. The short affair with Fanny is interesting also because it is a partial reversal of his first affair. Pen is still the prince, but this time Fanny recognizes his role as Emily never did, "and Arthur appeared to her at once as the type and realization of all the heroes of all those darling greasy volumes which the young girl had devoured. . . . The Prince had appeared and subjugated the poor

little handmaid" (608).

That he is rescued from a "vulgar intrigue" is not to his credit necessarily, as all Pen's important decisions are imposed upon him: Emily is bodily removed; Laura provides money for his escapes from Fairoaks; Fanny is saved by Pen's illness; Blanche moves to end their engagement. This is one of Pen's greatest flaws, his passivity, and he attains stature only when he takes a moral stand at the end of the book.

The process of role-playing through which Pen learns the nature of love is repeated in his various stances as a gentleman, and he eventually arrives at the position Thackeray endorses. Throughout the book, he constantly adopts and then abandons postures as each is proven no longer valid or useful. In turn, he progresses from a position demanding respect as Prince of Fairoaks, to a snob affronted when addressed by Samuel Huxter, to a dandy in London, which pose ironically contrasts his simultaneous pose as disillusioned cynic--witness his sartorial elegance. While his living derives from the literary profession, his dignity as a gentleman is never challenged, protected by his acquaintance with Lord Steyne. But only when he enjoys economic security is Pen at ease in this role, and then he becomes more amiable. All of these stances are ones supported by Major Pendennis and designed to promote Pen's social success. Not until he breaks from the Major's influence is Pen free to display the qualities which Thackeray most believes in: independence, consideration, and honesty.

The Major has been the agent of destruction for Pen's romantic dream, and by an ironic turn, Pen demolishes the Major's ambitions in his rejection of a seat in Parliament. Although he feels his uncle has

brought him to degradation, Pendennis makes his first honest and natural gesture in his acceptance of Blanche, an important step in the novel's resolution. The train ride to Tunbridge Wells for the final scene with Blanche provides Pendennis with his first period of soul-searching, and it is remarkable in that he now has abandoned all pretense and illusion; while not satisfied with his lot in life, he will accept it. The credit for Pen's maturation must go to Laura, who illuminates the truth for him in his life as Warrington does in his art. The pose of cynic does not succeed with Laura who has never had any misconceptions about Pen. While yet a child, she is amused by Pen's inflated posture and quickly discerns the truth about Blanche; and although never far from Helen's influence, she has the wisdom to refuse Pen's first proposal. She understands why Helen's vision cannot succeed until Pen is ready to accept it. Neither Warrington nor Laura have any illusions, but as both are in a sense retired from the world, Thackeray implies that in order to survive a total involvement in life, a certain amount of art is necessary. The problems arise when proportion is lost and society turns to artificial values instead of truth and love. Against characters such as Laura and Warrington whose inner self is without artifice, Thackeray measures the masks and illusions which others use to alter reality. Pen's natural affections are in danger of atrophy under the influence of Blanche and the Major, but he is rescued by Laura. Having come through, Pen can comprehend the tension of truth and illusion and is in a position to assess both his art and his life.

Because Laura has never seen Pen except as he really is and because she helps him resolve the problem of his life--that he cannot be

completely either a cynic or a sentimentalist--she should open the way to a solution in his art. But her desire to have him live at Fairoaks "and write books--good books, kind books, with gentle kind thoughts, such as you have, dear Arthur, and such as might do people good to read" (864) is not the answer. The books he has written have not provided the truth and Thackeray infers that Pen still has not succeeded in his art but at least is aware of the difficulty.

Art as a subject for critical concern within the book enters Pendennis in another way. An examination of the illustrations which Thackeray himself executed is profitable, for they testify to the seriousness with which Thackeray approached his art; and they visually support his intense interest in the various levels of reality and artifice in life. Unfortunately, this is an aspect of Thackeray too often neglected or ignored, with only two studies within the last decade examining this side of his art: John Harvey includes a chapter on Thackeray in Victorian Novelists and their Illustrators,[6] primarily an investigation of his use of pictorial capitals; Joan Stevens in "Thackeray's Vanity Fair"[7] laments that so few editions include any illustrations at all.

For the most part, the full page illustrations and inserts in Pendennis are examples of the narrative pictures which Thackeray admired so much, dealing with a particular incident of the book, and add little to the meaning of the work. Only the title pages and those pictorial capitals which support the themes examined in this study will be considered.

The illustration from the wrapper of the part issues is most important as it appeared continuously when the novel was published in

monthly numbers and would be constantly before the readers. An uncertain Pendennis is caught between the enticement of a siren-mermaid assisted by two cloven-hooved creatures and the entwining, suffocating arms of a wife and children. Of the two choices, the first looks more exciting, but the puzzled central figure stands with a foot in each camp. It is obvious that Thackeray wanted his readers to be aware from the very beginning of this tension in Pen's life between worldly and domestic love. When the novel appeared in book format, Thackeray altered the design considerably for the title page of Volume one. Neither choice appears as dangerous nor the struggle so difficult. The fishy tail of the siren is camouflaged by clothing and the assistant, now reduced to one, is impish rather than corrupt. On the other side, the domestic figures, also reduced in number, are more independent, and, because Pendennis has so obviously made a choice for the latter alternative, the impression is given that he was never really in danger, an opinion expressed by Laura at the end of the book. Thackeray has evidently re-evaluated Pendennis in this light and found the original illustration would not do. The title page for the second volume is less interesting, but shows the way for Pen's resolution; he kneels in homage before Laura, a book, symbol of his art, on the desk behind him, two versions of the truth he seeks.

In a realistic work, it would be expected that the illuminated letters would also be realistic, but many are not and for good reason. Thackeray used them as a vehicle of further judgement on the action of the novel much as he used literary conventions in the text, and they place the character's particular actions against a framework of recurring pattern. Despite the numerous varieties of love in the book, most of the

capitals dealing with the affliction depict a couple in eighteenth-century dress. The eighteenth-century couple in various settings and poses is one of the most frequently recurring symbols in the capitals. Sometimes, according to Tillotson and Harvey,[8] it refers to The Rape of the Lock and the pretense of lovers, evident enough in relation to Pen and Emily or Fanny or Blanche, but the image has an even greater effect when seen as the backdrop for Captain Shandon's neglect of his wife. Then, too, Thackeray uses it to set the fairy-tale encounter of Helen and Francis Bell against the hatred and coldness of his eventual wife. The symbol can also function on a pastoral level, most often in connection with Blanche, and occasionally with Fanny, to further cement their behavior within a convention. How much thought Thackeray gave his illustrations is evident when they are examined in sequence. Arcadia in "Phillis and Corydon" (Chapter LXIII), the pastoral setting for Pen's flirtation with Blanche, becomes in the next chapter the Garden of Eden complete with serpent. Blanche, relatively harmless in Arcadia, now combined with the Major's worldly ambitions is an instrument of temptation. The two larger inserts depicting Blanche and Pen in rural settings are at first glance disappointing because they are so realistic and banal, but when juxtaposed against the artificial capitals, reflect the two levels operating in the book, the one compromising the other.

Other capitals reinforce the artificiality of the lives of the characters by placing them within a universal framework. Pen's adventures in the world, his "Rake's Progress," can be understood completely just by looking at the capitals in the first half of the book. He is the child tied to his mother (Chapter XVIII), and the school boy (Chapter IX),

both realistic; but then in turn, he is a defeated soldier (Chapter XX), a knight (Chapter XXIX), a courtly hero (Chapter XLVIII), a figure under the influence of Pan (Chapter XXX), all roles which he enacts at some point, his responses determined by the particular conventions. Blanche, too, progresses from pure innocence (Chapter XXIII), to a sylph (Chapter XXXVII), a purely elemental being of no substance, to dangerous serpent enticing Pen (Chapter LXIV). The serpent, worldly temptation, often appears somewhat innocently coiled around the outline of a plate, and Thackeray even includes it around the pen and inkwell (Chapter XXXV), symbols of Pen's literary art, indicating the danger inherent in a worldly career, and of interferences in a search for truth. The siren, sexual temptation, is also repeated in the head letters. It can have a general connotation of Pen's exploits in college (Chapter XVIII) or a more specific relation to Fanny (Chapter LV).

The value of these illustrations and capitals as pictorial art is not important for this study nor is a judgement of Thackeray's draughtsmanship, generally conceded to be mediocre. But opposition must be taken to John Harvey's opinion that Thackeray's deficiency as an artist can be traced to an insufficient interest in life around him. His vision as an artist was hampered instead by an inability to make his fingers perform as he wanted, and an examination of his illuminated letters in particular clearly reveals the great interest Thackeray took in life, his comprehension of various levels of response, and his attempts to deal with the intricate relationship of reality and illusion. The value lies instead in the emphasis and support the illustrations provide for the themes of the book.

Thackeray works out in Pendennis, against the complexity of Victorian society, the themes which had occupied him since his early literary career. The struggles of a literary artist to penetrate humbug and pretense, not only in society but in his own profession, are set against the success of social artists, those who stylize their lives to cope with reality. Pen arrives at the end of the novel in a position to understand and differentiate the ambiguities of artifice and nature, truth and affectation. And he learns that the artist must be in control of his art, but for the correct reason, and that as an artist he has a moral responsibility to truth to fulfill through his art. All of the actions of the book are then shown to be part of the repeating pattern of human experience. It is this latter theme of placing what seems to be a particular action against the recurring cycles of human behavior which becomes a dominant theme in The Newcomes where Thackeray examines the responses of pictorial artists to the same world which obstructs Pendennis.

MR. THACKERAY'S NEW MONTHLY WORK.

THE

NEWCOMES

EDITED BY

ARTHUR PENDENNIS ESQRE

ILLUSTRATED by RICHARD DOYLE.

LONDON: BRADBURY AND EVANS, 11, BOUVERIE STREET.
1853.

No. 1. OCTOBER. Price 1s.

Facsimile Reproduction of the Wrapper of the First Part.

THE NEWCOMES

In The Newcomes, Thackeray further examines the levels of artifice and reality in society, the degree to which characters stylize their behavior, and the position and limitations of artists. At the same time, he illustrates, by using a fable framework, his concept of the moral function of art. Continuity is maintained by the use of Pendennis as narrator, a technique he found useful as he revealed in his letters: "Mr. Pendennis is to be the writer of his friend's memoirs and by the help of this little mask (wh. I borrowed from Pisistratus Bulwer I suppose) I shall be able to talk more at ease than in my own person" (Letters, III, 297-98).

The artistic career of Clive Newcome is closely parallelled by Thackeray's own personal experiences and just as parts of Pendennis give us insight into Thackeray's literary growth, so The Newcomes reveals his interest and involvement in painting.[1] Clive's history is one of interferences placed between himself and his art, not the least of which is his own approach. Like Pendennis, Clive's position as a gentleman is compromised by his position as an artist, but because he is rich, to a lesser degree, and also like Pendennis, he strikes a series of poses corresponding to his ideal for the moment. His mediocre and Ridley's successful careers illustrate the struggles of artists against the values of a commercial world.

Although Clive defends painting as formerly respectable, the Victorians reduce artists to the level of tradesmen.[2] Major Pendennis,

as usual, sets the tone: "An artist! By gad, in my time a fellow would as soon have thought of making his son a hairdresser or a pastry-cook, by gad" (302).[3] Even the Colonel and Ethel, who love Clive and therefore should be more understanding, cannot overcome their prejudice; although the Colonel maintains "an artist is any man's equal" (241) what is more important to him is social background, and he cannot forget that J. J. is a butler's son. Ethel, reflecting the middle-class position, doesn't think the artist's profession is good enough for Clive. As she writes the Colonel, "I know it is not wrong, but your son might look higher than to be an artist. It is a rise for Mr. Ridley, but a fall for him. An artist, an organist, a pianist, all these are very good people, but, you know, not de notre monde, and Clive ought to belong to it" (358). In The Newcomes, Thackeray examines the artistic community in some detail and his opinions on the state of art, its controlling factors and the duty of artists generally correspond to his earlier criticism, and support in another area, the concepts developed in Pendennis.

The power of the Royal Academy in controlling artists is clearly illustrated by the careers of art students. Clive and J. J. study at Gandish's Drawing Academy, a private art school, rather than at a free academy school, although they might then progress to the academy. Thackeray himself received training from this kind of art studio and Gandish is reputed to be modelled on his master, Henry Sass.[4] Although neither of the art schools in the novel is conducted by members of the academy, the art produced is invariably historical and classical in nature, or portraiture. Gandish has devoted years to vast historic

canvases, Boadicea, King Alfred with the cakes, or "Beauty, Valour, Commerce, and Liberty condoling with Britannia on the death of Admiral Viscount Nelson" (220). His efforts clearly illustrate the discrepancy between the dictates of the academy and public taste; historic paintings are hopelessly incongruous to contemporary England and the unwieldy size renders them virtually unsalable. In fact, Gandish himself admits "'igh art won't do in this country, Colonel--it's a melancholy fact" (219), and his explanation for that fact, "because there is no patronage for a man who devotes himself to 'igh art" (221) is partially valid. The state had no program whereby it decorated public buildings with historic pictures, but it did endorse the academy's artistic preference by deciding English historical and allegorical subjects were the best designs for the rebuilt Houses of Parliament. For many years, artists were occupied in executing sketches and cartoons, or later if accepted by the commission, frescoes, all on historic subjects. But the whole process had an inverse effect on the popularity of this branch of art, and the result was the final demise of historic painting.[5] The rival art studio, a combined life and costume academy and design school, belonged to Barker who, though a professed rebel against the academy, paints heroic pictures of King Edward. Another professional artist, Smee, a portrait painter, is a member of the Royal Academy as Gandish and Barker are not.

Neither historic nor portrait painters find their inspiration in nature, a source which Thackeray considers essential to good art, and his own humility as an artist prevents any acceptance of the flamboyant posture of historic artists. Smee illustrates another facet of the

pretentiousness Thackeray sees in the art world; he fawns and degrades himself to obtain commissions, but more damning, he is a humbug mouthing critical opinions he doesn't believe and willingly alters the truth of a portrait to make it more agreeable for the client. Neither Gandish nor Smee is a talented painter, although Gandish has the saving grace of being an excellent master and a good critic, if only of others.

The academy provided an opportunity for artists, if their work was accepted, to exhibit before a large audience, and election to its ranks as either associate or a full member insured a degree of success. But the real direction of art came in spite of the influence of the academy, from the public and from artists themselves. Narrative art, which grew to be so popular in mid-century, was advanced by a group of artists called the Clique, and the movement gathered momentum from the Pre-Raphaelites with their insistence on realistic detail and truth to nature. The reaction of artists against the academy in no way precluded exhibition of their works or even their election as members; J. E. Millais, a founding member of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, later became president of the academy.

Thackeray, in his insistence, first evident in his criticism, that the direction and quality of art is a responsibility of art students, reflects somewhat this trend, but the art students of the novel, with the exception of J. J., unquestioningly maintain the traditional subjects. The students cannot see the incongruity of deriding Robert Haydon, an adamant historical painter, or Charles Eastlake, later president of the Royal Academy, and yet still painting heroic pictures themselves. The tendency to follow the fashion instead of leading carries over to

the continent. So in Rome the students, like their predecessors, ignore scenes from local life, Thackeray's favorite subject, and, instead of using their own experience, insist on choosing subjects remarkably foreign to their natural interests and talents. "There were young sculptors who had never read a line of Homer, who took on themselves nevertheless to interpret and continue the heroic Greek art. There were young painters with the strongest natural taste for low humour, comic singing, and Cider-Cellar jollifications, who would imitate nothing under Michael Angelo, and whose canvases teemed with tremendous allegories of fates, furies, genii of death and battle" (508). Further indication of the situation of art is the appointment of Fred Bayham as fine arts critic to the Pall Mall Gazette. His criticism, typical of the day, consists primarily of the indiscriminate praise abhorrent to Thackeray, but as Pendennis says "he knows as much about pictures as some critics I could name" (279).

Against this backdrop is set Clive's artistic career. His decision to become an artist is incomprehensible to the Colonel, who is more of the world than he realizes, and who would readily accept art as a hobby: "The Muse of Painting is a lady whose social station is not altogether recognized with us as yet. The polite world permits a gentleman to amuse himself with her, but to take her for better or for worse! forsake all other chances and cleave unto her! to assume her name! Many a respectable person would be as much shocked at the notion as if his son had married an opera dancer" (339).

On first becoming an art student, Clive adopts the romantic style with mustaches and velvet jackets and "so his life is consistent with

his dress; he gives his genius a darkling swagger, and a romantic envelope, which, being removed, you find, not a brave, but a kind chirping soul" (215). He has difficulty coming to terms with his talent, vacillating between various branches of painting. He begins "as an historical painter, deeming that the highest branch of art; and declining . . . to operate on any but the largest canvases" (270), forsakes it for classical art, returns to historical and fails at all attempts at "high art," but enjoys a measure of success at animal painting and at sketching. In none of these attempts is his heart involved, but he performs according to the pattern he feels appropriate. His only truly successful picture, the head of the Colonel, is a triumph because his sympathies and emotions are honestly committed, the closest Clive ever comes to Thackeray's true artist.

Although much puffed by Gandish and his fellow art students, by virtue of his gentlemanly position, Clive never long deceives himself about his talents. As he tells his father about J. J. Ridley, the real artist, "I can beat him in drawing horses, I know, and dogs; but I can only draw what I see. Somehow he seems to see things we don't, don't you know?" (166). The insufficiency of his vision does not affect his decision; he begins to study seriously and at periods throughout the book industriously follows his muse: "Having made up his mind that art was his calling, he refused to quit her for any other mistress, and plied his easel very stoutly" (268). But as an artist he can never completely separate himself from the role of gentleman, and while he swears his allegiance to painting as a vocation, he often treats it as a mere pastime, an attitude more admissible to society.

Enthusiastically as Clive embarks on his career, he never can find the dedication to fulfill the promises of his talent. His attitude is one of dalliance interspersed with the social activities in which he excels, and although it "was agreed that if he chose he might do anything" (513), Clive is the first to admit his insufficiencies. His art is always to a certain degree incomplete: "He had a natural genius for his art, and had acquired in his desultory way a very considerable skill. His drawing was better than his painting . . . his designs and sketches were far superior to his finished compositions" (938-39), and the major difference in technique between himself and J. J. is that J. J. succeeds at the painting, the coloration, the more advanced aspects. Clive's explanation is that "it was not the will, but the power that was deficient" (591); however, there is very little evidence that Clive is capable of concentrated dedication.

Clive has been influenced by art more than he realizes. Paris, Antwerp, and Rome, traditional centres of art, are all seen by him in terms of heroic and romantic battles, and he is impressed as much by their historic backgrounds as by their contemporary interest. And he is profoundly affected by the calm of classical art, although he continues to paint with passionate frenzy, made more obvious by the serenity of J. J.. With his career already hindered by lack of application, Clive suffers from a limited imaginative vision. Kneeling before a picture of the Virgin, reputedly powerful enough to convert a Jew, Clive "saw no glimpse of Heaven at all, [he] saw but a poor picture, an altar with blinking candles, a church hung with tawdry strips of red and white calico" (464). J. J. by contrast is "immensely touched by

these ceremonies. They seem to answer to some spiritual want of his nature, and he comes away satisfied as from a feast, where Clive has found only vacancy" (464).

The one recurring motif in Clive's art is the figure of Ethel; he worships her as a work of art and in fact regards all women in the same way: "To be beautiful is enough. If a woman can do that well, who shall demand more from her? . . . And I think wit is out of place where there's great beauty!" (315). The fallacy of this statement is easily illustrated by Rosey, beautiful but witless. His regard for women is based on visual appreciation of their external attractions. Ethel is the most obvious example, but he sees Miss Sherrick in terms of a Titian head and Rosey as a Rubens portrait. If Ethel is a princess to the Colonel, she is the huntress Diana or Judith to Clive. During their early relationship he rarely sees Ethel but he does not want to paint her, to incorporate her into a larger work of art. The reunion between the Newcome family, Clive, and J. J. at Bonn is explained by Clive in terms of a large painting, complete with the Rhine in the background and Ethel the principal figure, described by means of color, form, light and shadow. Among other qualities, "her form, her glorious colour of rich carnation and dazzling white, her queenly grace" (386) arouse Clive to admiration and:

> As he looked at a great picture or statue, as the Venus de Milo, calm and deep, unfathomably beautiful as the sea from which she sprang; as he looked at the rushing Aurora of the Rospigliosi, or the Assumption of Titian, more bright and glorious than sunshine, or that divine Madonna and divine Infant, of Dresden, whose sweet faces must have shone upon Raphael out of heaven; Clive's heart sang hymns, as it were, before these gracious altars; and, somewhat as he worshipped these masterpieces of his art he admired the beauty of Ethel. (386)

But Clive is a passionate romantic artist in spite of his admiration for classicism. On one hand, he wants Ethel to behave as a classic statue. On the other, he wants her to fulfill his own romantic plan, similar to the Colonel's. In their interchange in the garden of the Hôtel de Florac, he tells Ethel:

> 'I remember one of the days when I first saw you, I had been reading the Arabian Nights at school--and you came in in a bright dress of shot silk, amber and blue--and I thought you were like that fairy-princess who came out of the crystal box . . . I remember when I thought I would like to be Ethel's knight, and that if there was anything she would have me do, I would try and achieve it in order to please her.' (621)

Ethel's vacillation between poses of society princess and sentimental shepherdess confuses Clive who moves from a position where he can say "my art, Ethel, is not only my choice and my love, but my honour too" (634) to a state where he laments "why did I ever leave my art, my mistress?" (885). Ethel's artifice as much as the Colonel's illusions destroys Clive's artistic impulses. The art object has obliterated the artist; Ethel, fulfilling her role as Diana and Judith, has become a force of destruction. Clive fails both as a man and an artist because he does not seek the truth with sufficient ardor. Even surrounded by friends and family, he is a solitary character refusing or incapable of intense personal relationship except with J. J.. Ethel he wants as a work of art with little or no interaction, but her independent actions disqualify her for the role of a passive classical statue, and he withdraws intentionally from Rosey and his father. Lonely, unable to fill the vacuum, even with his art, Clive is the most pathetic figure of the novel. Clive is less complex than Pendennis because he makes no attempt to resolve the conflicts which threaten his art. Of some of the conflicts

he is not even aware and he remains the most passive of all the characters. He chooses art because he enjoys it and has some talent, but the main function of his art is that it serves as a refuge from the realities of his life, the reality of a lost Ethel and the reality of a Rosey. So he uses art and the companionship of his fellow artists in Rome to forget Ethel, and turns to his work and J. J. in the midst of his unhappy marriage. His love for his father prevents an active struggle against the Colonel's art but in a fight for survival, inaction is fatal.

Clive has no pretensions about his talent or his profession; as he tells Pendennis, "ours is a trade for which nowadays there is no excuse unless one can be great in it: and I feel I have not the stuff for that" (661), and he is able to discern a posture of affected importance in other artists. But he never successfully resolves his conflict of gentleman as artist, and much of his artistic motivation is to gain success for Ethel's sake. When he cannot win her, he loses interest in art.

It is doubly ironic that J. J. should succeed where Clive fails because Clive has all the elements necessary to success as a Victorian artist. Wealthy, popular, he has, moreover, "considerable talent, and a good knack at catching a likeness. He could not paint a bit, to be sure, but his heads in black and white were really tolerable; his sketches of horses very vigourous and lifelike" (577). If Clive had not been so lazy or had not been subjected to his father's interference, he might have been an adequate artist, especially at portraits: "He had the art of seizing the likeness, and of making all his people look like gentlemen, too" (642). Such a faculty could not go long unnoticed and

he might have become another Smee.

As a standard for the sham and humbug of the artistic profession, Thackeray presents J. J. as an ideal figure, the true artist. Always in Clive's shadow, almost forgotten in the background, J. J. displays a singular imaginative capacity in spite of his environment and lack of encouragement. The contrast between illusion and reality in J. J.'s life is truly remarkable; as Miss Cann plays the piano J. J. "listens with all his soul, with tears sometimes in his great eyes, with crowding fancies filling his brain, and throbbing at his heart" (153), and he creates visions to coincide with her music. "All these delights and sights, and joys and glories, these thrills of sympathy, movements of unknown longing, and visions of beauty, a young sickly lad of eighteen enjoys in a little dark room where there is a bed disguised in the shape of a wardrobe, and a little old woman is playing under a gas-lamp on the jingling keys of an old piano" (154). J. J. is then able to transform his visions into his art; "all those beautiful sounds and thoughts which Miss Cann conveys to him out of her charmed piano; the young artist straightway translates into forms . . . splendid forms of war and beauty crowd to the young draughtsman's pencil, and cover letter-backs, copy-books, without end" (157-58). Then if some of his forms please him, "our young Pygmalion hides away the masterpiece, and he paints the beauty with all his skill . . . and he worships this sweet creature of his in secret; fancies a history for her; a castle to storm" (158), but he never falls victim to his illusions even though he, perhaps, of anyone in the novel has the most excuse, his 'real' life not being very satisfactory. All of the romantic inclinations which are denied to him,

he incorporates into his visions containing the stock ingredients of castles, tyrants, and princesses, but unlike the Colonel, J. J. never attempts to force a reality upon them. Perhaps myopia is an additional advantage for his sensibilities have not been blunted; he draws what "he has seen, or fancied he has seen" (158).

Nevertheless, the power of his visions surpasses that of any other character. The difference delineated throughout the book sets the others--artists and laymen--apart from J. J. to whom "splendours of Nature were revealed to vulgar sights invisible, and beauties manifest in forms, colours, shadows of common objects, where most of the world saw only what was dull, and gross and familiar" (160). This insufficiency in others to see as J. J. does forces them to recreate life as they do see it. He can comprehend the charm of nature:

> . . . which reveals to the possessor the hidden spirits of beauty round about him, spirits which the strongest and most gifted masters compel into painting or song! To others it is granted but to have fleeting glimpses of that fair Art-world; and tempted by ambition, or barred by faint-heartedness, or driven by necessity, to turn away thence to the vulgar life-track, and the light of common day. (160)

Because his vision is satisfactory as vision, J. J. has no need to alter reality, a unique position in the novel. Imagination is one of J. J.'s most valuable assets, and separates him from Clive who has no imaginative vision, and from the Colonel, who turns his vision into life. Rosey illustrates the total lack of imagination; she prefers Madame Tussaud's wax museum, the ultimate in realistic imitation, to any paintings.

The most striking feature of J. J.'s personality is the serenity with which he approaches his art, a quality which he never loses. While Clive is busily executing large historical canvases in fits of energy,

J. J. steadily plies his brush on what are usually small pictures. Even Clive can see his error: "Art ought not to be a fever. It ought to be a calm; not a screaming bull-fight or a battle of gladiators, but a temple for placid contemplation, rapt worship, stately rhythmic ceremony, and music solemn and tender" (273). J. J. never forsakes that temple: "Whenever you found him he seemed watchful and serene, his modest virgin-lamp always lighted and [redacted] No gusts of passion extinguished it; no hopeless wandering in the darkness afterward led him astray" (510). While Thackeray rejects classical art, his true artist displays the calm of classicism in his approach to his work; he is always in control of his art, although the art itself is never passionless.

The one flaw which Thackeray reveals in J. J.'s existence centres on his relationship to art. While his ardent application indubitably contributes to his artistic development and success, that success is dependent upon the total denial of other facets of life. Art seems to answer "to some spiritual want of his nature" (464), supplies his recreation, and as "his sole mistress, rewarded him for his steady and fond pursuit of her" (661). Although Thackeray left indication that he intended to develop J. J. further in another novel,[6] the impression remains that a devotion to art necessarily excludes a complete participation in life. While this aspect perhaps results from Thackeray's concern with proper application of talent and his own lack of industry, it does present a limitation in the artistic figure.

J. J. is primarily a romantic, sentimental artist whose first efforts, besides his illustrations prompted by Miss Cann, are inspired by romantic novels. Although Clive, it is true, enjoys the greater

success at Gandish's, J. J. is "pronounced to be a genius. His copies were beautiful in delicacy and finish. His designs were exquisite for grace and richness of fancy" (230). In comparison to Clive's prodigious output in Rome, J. J.'s appears insignificant except that his "two beautiful little pictures" are sold. Having presented his idealized artist, Thackeray cannot allow Victorian society any credit for recognizing his genius. J. J.'s success depends partially on his skill, but the public's attention is directed primarily by other motives. Most helpful are the puffery of Fred Bayham in the Pall Mall Gazette, and the dinner invitation from Lord Todmorden; but his position is only secured when Lord Kew purchases his paintings at the exhibition.

As the motifs of the book present the Colonel as Don Quixote, and Clive as a prince, J. J. is highly idealized as a saint, a 'calm recluse' surrounded by a halo, a true knight protected from idleness and Victorian commercialism by his art:

> The palette on his arm was a great shield painted of many colours: he carried his maul-stick and a sheaf of brushes along with it, the weapons of his glorious but harmless war. With these he achieves conquests, wherein none are wounded save the envious: with that he shelters him against how much idleness, ambition, temptation! Occupied over that consoling work, idle thoughts cannot gain the mastery over him: selfish wishes or desires are kept at bay. Art is truth: and truth is religion: and its study and practice a daily work of pious duty. (850-51)

Against a pervading theme of "vanitas vanitatum! which of us is happy in this world? Which of us has his desire? or having it is satisfied?" (XI, 878), J. J. is unique for he both has his desire and is genuinely satisfied at this point. Of all the characters in the book, he has achieved the peace of mind and soul, through his art, which is elusive to others.

The Newcomes is also a novel about the fashionable London world of arranged marriages where children are the pawns in a game for financial and social security. Love and natural affection are not considerations as Lady Kew and the Dorkings pressure their children into these disastrous marriages. The future of the younger generations is decided by the elder in the name of society, but with unhappy results evident in Barnes Newcome's marriage. In an equally damaging way, Colonel Newcome devises a romantic plan for Clive's future, but it is a plan of compensation, one in which, through Clive, the Colonel intends to repair and reconstruct his own past. He is guilty of the common sin in the world of Vanity Fair, the idea that money is a panacea. Because he is rich, he thinks of Clive as a prince and the castles which the Colonel imaginatively conceives appear to be within grasp. On the surface, his plans seem harmless enough, "to see Prince Clive ride in a gold coach with a princess beside him, was the kind old Colonel's ambition; that done, he would be content to retire to a garret in a prince's castle, and smoke his cheroot there in peace" (683), but juxtaposed to Clive's own personality and artistic inclination they are dangerous. The Colonel's art and Clive's art cannot co-exist; while one thrives, the other languishes and Clive's artistic sensibilities are all but smothered by his father.

The Colonel's vision excludes a recognition of any other form of art. Accompanying his son to the art museums, he cannot comprehend Clive's admiration for line and form. "Why can't I love the things which he loves?" he thinks, "why am I blind to the beauties which he admires so much?" (265). Unable to understand art, he cannot understand

the artist; "not being a poet himself, he could not see the nobility of that calling; and felt secretly that his son was demeaning himself by pursuing the art of painting" (674). But the Colonel is as much an artist in his own way as Clive is, in fact even more so, for he has a vision which Clive lacks. Reflecting on these differences, he recognizes the enormity of the conflict.

> So, as he thought what vain egotistical hopes he used to form about the boy when he was away in India--how in his plans for the happy future, Clive was to be always at his side; how they were to read, work, play, think, be merry together--a sickening and humiliating sense of the reality came over him: and he sadly contrasted it with the former fond anticipations. Together they were, yet he was alone still. His thoughts were not the boy's: and his affections rewarded but with a part of the young man's heart. Very likely other lovers have suffered equally. (265)

Once having seen the obstacle, the Colonel chooses to reject Clive's individuality in favor of his own plans. This theme of the Colonel as artist is fully examined by R. D. McMaster in "The Pygmalion Theme in The Newcomes,"[7] an article which touches closely several points explored in this chapter.

On meeting his niece Ethel, the memory of Leonora rushes back to the Colonel although "there was no point of resemblance" (200) between the two girls. What was once a nebulous plan, based on general ideas of wealth and gentlemanly rank for Clive, finds direction in the Colonel's desire to repeat his own past. From this point, Ethel replaces Leonora in his romance, and the fairy-tale reference, already applicable to Clive, broadens: "As for Colonel Thomas Newcome and his niece, they fell in love with each other instantaneously, like Prince Camaralzaman and the Princess of China" (200). If Leonora becomes Ethel, the Colonel cannot quite become Clive, for the major flaw in the plan is that no

adjustment is made for his son. The Colonel does not accept his disappointment passively: "If God had so willed it, I might have been happy myself, and could have made a woman happy. But the Fates were against me" (204). Ethel becomes the talisman of everything missing from his life as he intends to play God if he can, ignoring the fact that he might again fail. The fault this time is not in the Fates, but in his inability to reconcile his illusion with Clive's reality. But the design is self-defeating by virtue of the fact that the life created for Clive stifles him, a condition ultimately passed on to the Colonel.

The Colonel persists in seeing Clive as a prince in a fairy-tale designed to protect him from life, but Clive without any help from his father is more like the prince who has not yet suffered the fate of fairy-tales and fables: "As those guileless virgins of romance and ballad, who walk smiling through dark forests charming off dragons and confronting lions; the young man as yet went through the world harmless; no giant waylaid him as yet; no robbing ogre fed on him: and (greatest danger of all for one of his ardent nature) no winning enchantress or artful siren coaxed him to her cave, or lured him into her waters--haunts into which we know so many young simpletons are drawn, where their silly bones are picked and their tender flesh devoured" (357). The Colonel, Mrs. Mack, and Rosey are all anticipated in this passage as is Clive's fate, all ironic results of the Colonel's plan.

That plan focusses on a wife for Clive and solidifies when he first meets Ethel. But as Clive as yet is only sixteen, the idea remains on the level of pure fairy-tale: "The Colonel from his balcony saw the slim figure of the retreating girl, and looked fondly after her; and as

the smoke of his cigar floated in the air, he formed a fine castle in it, whereof Clive was lord, and that pretty Ethel, lady" (204). As Major Pendennis says, "And that shows how monstrous ignorant of the world Colonel Newcome is. His son could no more get that girl than he could marry one of the royal princesses" (301). The Colonel in fact has always been isolated from the world even as a young man, and in spite of his insistence on his worldly sophistication, cannot compete in the same league as the Newcomes.

Ethel, removed from reach by Lady Kew, is replaced quite happily with Rosey MacKenzie. The rationale throughout has been to provide a safe refuge for Clive to remove him from dangers of life, and with James Binnie, the Colonel decides on Rosey--"So the kind scheme of the two elders was, that their young ones should marry and be happy ever after, like the prince and princess of the fairy-tale" (332). As he had done before, the Colonel begins the courtship, supplying the bouquets Clive forgets, ignoring the realities of such a union. He misjudges Rosey's qualities as a wife for Clive and cannot see it is the worst possible choice for an artist; Rosey never understands nor appreciates Clive's art. The marriage entered by Clive to "fulfil the wish of his father's heart, and cheer his kind declining years" (818) is actually between Rosey and the Colonel not Clive "who in truth was somehow in the background in this flourishing Newcome group" (817). "Colonel Newcome," as Laura Pendennis says, "performs all the courtship part of the marriage" (843), but the fault for this can only partially be ascribed to the Colonel, for Clive neglects Rosey, and though his manner is gentler than Barnes', the result is the same. If the Colonel does perform his

part happily, he must object when Clive remains "but a listless, useless member of the little confederacy, a living protest against all the schemes of the good man's past life" (835). The union never does prosper as fairy-tales should and when obstacles arise in the plan, as in the death of the first baby, it is the Colonel who is grief-stricken, Rosey easily recovers, and Clive's feelings are never mentioned. And later, the Colonel cannot assimilate Clive's refusal to join actively the election campaign in Newcome, also part of the plan for Clive's future: "His life had been a sacrifice for that boy! What darling schemes had he not formed in his behalf, and how superciliously did Clive meet his projects! The Colonel could not see the harm of which he had himself been the author" (872). Fairy-tales come true are not sufficient after all and on learning the truth in Clive's heart, he begins "to own that he had pressed him too hastily in his marriage; and to make an allowance for an unhappiness of which he had in part been the cause" (880).

The major wall between father and son is the question of vision, the Colonel's romantic vision by which he fashions Clive's future and Clive's own deficiency of vision. The Colonel's art is founded on "selfish wishes or desires," far removed from the "glories, joys, secrets, consolations" of true art and "in place of Art the Colonel brings him a ledger; and in lieu of first love, shows him Rosey" (851). Clive is defeated by the illusions because he has no imaginative power of his own as an escape valve as does J. J. and the defeat is transmitted eventually to the Colonel.

His own art has become a barrier to his father: "Palettes and brushes! Could he not give up these toys when he was called to a much higher station in the world? Could he not go talk with Rosey; drive with Rosey, kind little soul, whose whole desire was to make him happy? Such thoughts as these, no doubt, darkened the Colonel's mind, and deepened the furrows round his old eyes. So it is, we judge men by our own standards; judge our nearest and dearest often wrong" (827-28).

While Clive's art has managed to survive to some degree against the artifice of Ethel and against the romantic illusions of his father, it succumbs to the combination of the two versions of reality. The Colonel has replaced Ethel with Rosey and material extravagance, but even the fairy-tale sours in the sterile pastoral mansion in Tyburnia, reminiscent of Lady Clavering's house with its roses, cupids, shepherds and bad pastels. Rosey thrives here because it is the perfect setting for her, but it is the ultimate separation for Clive and his father. Nowhere is this division more apparent nor judgement of Victorian taste more damning than in the silver coco-nut tree presented to Rosey by the Bundelcund Banking Company. Accepted as a "splendid specimen" of the skill of British artists, it is "a superb silver coco-nut-tree, whereof the leaves were dexterously arranged for holding candles and pickles; under the coco-nut was an Indian prince on a camel giving his hand to a cavalry officer on horseback--a howitzer, a plough, a loom, a bale of cotton . . . a brahmin, Britannia, and Commerce, with a cornucopia were grouped round the principal figures" (823-24). The commercial ideal of art reduced to a pickle dish deeply wounds the sensibilities of Clive and J. J., sensibilities not understood by the Victorian world which "enters into

the artist's studio, and scornfully bids him a price for his genius, or makes dull pretence to admire it" (851).

The world of the Newcomes is a world where mercenary and ambitious ideals are covered with a veneer of respectability (the book's subtitle is "Memoirs of a Most Respectable Family"), where spontaneous emotions are smothered and the actions of the characters calculated. While the wealthy middle-class attitude toward art stifles the artist altogether or invites mediocrity, the Victorian milieu is very conducive and even encouraging to the fictions of the Newcome variety. Some characters, Mrs. Hobson Newcome, for example, believe completely in the roles they play oblivious to their actual motivation; so she sees herself as Virtue personified, a bulwark against the social-climbing branch of the family, instead of an envious woman. Barnes Newcome disguises his fear and insecurity with piety which gives him the necessary degree of respectability. His facade of gentlemanliness succeeds very well and he counteracts the publicity of his brutality to Clara by the stance of domesticity, a valued Victorian quality, in his lectures on "The Poetry of Childhood" and "The Poetry of Womanhood, and the Affections." The illusion of morality is more important in his world than actual practice.

The artificiality of the lives of the characters is paralleled by the artificiality of their religion which has failed to provide meaning and truth in a moral vacuum. The church, like everything else, has become a commercial enterprise, a "good speculation," operated on the principles of a theatre. From the "Cave of Harmony" singers who double as a choir, to the Jewish Sherrick women at Honeyman's chapel who "dress the part, sir, to admiration--a sort of nun-like costume" (581) to the

Rev. Charles Honeyman, a clerical actor of sanctimonious roles, an impresario playing to a full house, the illusion of piety is maintained, an illusion accepted by the congregation as one of the foundations of society. Nothing could be further from the lives of the saints than Honeyman's comfortable existence of embroidered slippers, blacked boots and perfumes, or "the pocket-handkerchief with which he dries and draws so many tears. For he cries a good deal in his sermons, to which the ladies about him contribute showers of sympathy" (147). In order to rally the drooping popularity of Lady Whittlesea's Chapel and to keep the boxes full, he takes lessons from an acting coach, recycles his old sermons, now with "new scenery, dresses and effects" (581), and feigns consumption. Never very strong on spiritual aspects, Honeyman, frequently defeated theologically by James Binnie, never varies the slightest in his thinking "but the battle over, Charles Honeyman, would pick up these accoutrements which he had flung away in his retreat, wipe them dry, and put them on again" (529). Nor does the congregation expect anything different. Society changes its churches as the fashion dictates and spiritual guidance is the least of concerns for both the congregation and Honeyman.

"As a rule," Lady Kew says, "nobody is of a good family" (685). If that is an underlying condition of Thackeray's Vanity Fair, it is one which no one endures for long; not satisfied with reality, the characters create their own versions which either modify or replace the truth. This fiction, in which nearly every character participates, may take the form of a creation of a past, a present, or a future. The whole Newcome family is guilty of fashioning the past to suit the desires and aims of

the present in their abandonment of their direct ancestor, the weaver, for a more impressive lineage from the surgeon-barber of Edward the Confessor. As time passes, the family begins to believe in the illusion of this descent, insisting that the town Newcome was named after their father, instead of their father, a foundling, after the town. To a lesser degree, Miss Honeyman is guilty of the same façade, presenting herself as a gentlewoman superior to her fellow tradesfolk in Brighton instead of a clergyman's daughter. The reason so much trouble is taken to create a past is, of course, to provide success in society. The Newcome family, having achieved one half of the requirements, wealth, is obsessed with the other half, rank.

Pretense in the present has become a way of life for the Newcome brothers who maintain artificial appearances: Brian looks "like the Portrait of a Gentleman at the Exhibition . . . dignified in attitude, bland, smiling, and statesmanlike," while Hobson affects "the country-gentleman in his appearance. His hat had a broad brim, and the ample pockets of his cut-away coat were never destitute of agricultural produce, samples of beans or corn . . . and he was pleased to be so taken--for a jolly country squire" (76). Appropriately enough, Hobson is the better businessman of the partnership, rarely seeing the country.

But it is the intention to control the future which is most dangerous in the novel. Characters, like Colonel Newcome, who have a vision of a future which will provide compensation for former disappointments, or like Lady Kew, who arrange marriages for money and social prestige, manipulate others according to their own designs.

The function of the novelist, Thackeray declares, is "to attempt to record with the accuracy of an historian and from a moral viewpoint a balanced picture of society."[8] Nowhere does he so clearly illustrate the moral duty of a writer than in the history of The Newcomes, surely a "balanced picture of society," by placing the action of the novel within the construct of a fable. Beginning with what is actually an amalgamation of fables, representing the spectrum of human behavior, he demands: "What stories are new? All types of all characters march through all fables. . . . There may be nothing new under and including the sun; but it looks fresh every morning" (5). Fables, unlike other literary conventions incorporated into the book, are not a pattern for behavior but rather a frame of reference, allowing Thackeray the moralist to remain inconspicuous. In this particular instance, however, there will be a variation in the standard fable format:

> It does not follow that all men are honest because they are poor; and I have known some who were friendly and generous, although they had plenty of money. There are some great landlords who do not grind down their tenants; there are actually bishops who are not hypocrites. . . . But who ever heard of giving the Moral before the Fable? Children are only led to accept the one after their delectation over the other: let us take care lest our readers skip both. (6)

When Thackeray reverts to the fable at the end of the novel, he leaves the characters to "fade away into fable-land" (1007). The fate of many characters remains indefinite, unheard of in a fable where "wicked folks die a propos . . . annoying folks are got out of the way; the poor are rewarded--the upstarts are set down in fableland. . . . And the poet of fable-land rewards and punishes absolutely" (1009). But poetic justice does not exist in the fallen world of the Newcomes, only in fables and fairy-tales. Virtuous characters do not necessarily triumph and

their wish-fulfilling plans often are futile.

Because Thackeray has already made his point, delivered his moral, the final fate of the characters remains irrelevant to the theme of the novel. The indefiniteness of the ending--"You may settle your fable-land in your own fashion. Anything you like happens in fable-land' (1009) enhances the note of wistfulness for "happy, harmless fable-land, where these things are!" at the end of a story of destruction of both lives and illusions. Except that fable-land is not so harmless as it seems, witness the fate of the animals.

To emphasize the division in The Newcomes between a mimetic realistic work and a contrived fiction, Thackeray draws a comparison between the truth of an historian and the power of a narrator to shape the materials:

> And, as is the case with the most orthodox histories, the writer's own guesses or conjectures are printed in exactly the same type as the most ascertained patent facts. I fancy, for my part, that the speeches attributed to Clive, the Colonel and the rest, are as authentic as the orations in Sallust or Livy, and only implore the truth-loving public to believe that incidents here told, and which passed very probably without witnesses, were either confided to me subsequently as compiler of this biography, or are of such a nature that they must have happened from what we know happened after. (297)

The tension between reality and fiction is constantly thrown before the reader. As in Pendennis, Thackeray uses a knowledgeable narrator, asserting the truth of what he says, set against the author who manipulates all, including the narrator, in dramatic interludes. From the first chapter entitled "The Overture--After which the Curtain Rises upon a Drinking Chorus," Thackeray does not intend his fiction to be mistaken for reality, but having said that, and notwithstanding his

allusions to fable and fairy-tale throughout, the Newcome family becomes very real and immediate. When he reverts to dramatic interludes as in the chapter "Containing Two or Three Acts of a Little Comedy," and in the later scene in the Pendennis household in Chapter XLIX, the realistic qualities are doubly compromised. By asserting his control over the characters in a dramatic scene complete with stage directions, his characters become manipulated puppets; but also and more importantly for the action, the sequences reinforce the interchange of reality and fiction in the lives of the characters.

The setting for the first series of dialogues is the garden of the Hôtel de Florac, a sterile setting, static, populated with grey, moss-covered statues. Ethel, like Blanche, has become the shepherdess with Clive as her swain and both respond with artificial behavior. Ethel has tried to evaluate her position but like Pendennis vacillates between two equally artificial poses, the sentimental and the sophisticated. If her worldly pose is encouraged by Lady Kew, the sentimental illusion is self-imposed. While she can see the false values of society, she chooses to remain part of it; but the longer she is exposed, the more she becomes susceptible and even though at seventeen "truth looks out of her bright eyes, and rises up armed, and flashes scorn or denial perhaps too readily, when she encounters flattery, or meanness, or imposture" (307), she compromises that truth by electing to play by society's rules. Throughout, her point of view is that because she has been programmed for a certain role she is powerless to escape it however much she may attack it. Seeing herself as a creation of someone else, not a princess, not an artistic masterpiece, but as a commodity to be sold, she responds

by wearing the 'sold' ticket from the art exhibition. Occasionally, as in the garden dialogue, Ethel pretends a revolt against her worldly life and "often thinks she would like to retire to [a convent]; and she sighs as if her heart were in that scheme" (617). But neither pattern of behavior is instrumental in solving her dilemma. Her performances become so complete that she reaches a point of not being able to distinguish her poses from genuine feeling.

Having established The Newcomes as a fable with characters who can be manipulated at will, Thackeray then develops the story as a romance, a fairy-tale where it is often difficult to differentiate illusion from reality. And he shows how easy it is to create a "once upon a time" fairy-tale. Memory can distort the past, so that what emerges as the past is really an illusion of a time when the sun shone brighter than it "appears" to now, when vices and pleasures "seemed" more delicious. This conflict between illusion and reality of the past first becomes obvious in the "Cave of Harmony" where Colonel Newcome reminisces about his youth as "the golden time--the happy, the bright, the unforgotten" (12), but his impression is soon proven fallacious in the next chapters dealing with his unhappy childhood and youth. And his innocence of the Newcome world, at first humorous, becomes increasingly dangerous throughout the book because it is static, never developing into experience. Thus he proceeds to destroy not only his own life and Clive's, but those of his friends who took his financial advice. Colonel Newcome vividly illustrates one reason why old stories seem new; he is incapable of learning by experience. Enduring a marriage to a woman he did not love, haunted by the memory of one he did, the Colonel cannot transfer that

knowledge to Clive's condition. So blatant a misconception of his son could only lead to disaster. The world of the Colonel is the world of romance: the Colonel is Don Quixote or Sir Charles Grandison, Clive is a prince, Lady Kew a wicked witch and Ethel a princess. In the artificial world of romance, an alternative to the artificial world of society, the quest for truth becomes adulterated and the only true knight turns out to be the artist J. J. Ridley.

It is the part of the normal experience of characters in Pendennis and The Newcomes to stylize their lives on artificial patterns, and what seems unique, in a particular instance, is shown to be thoroughly conventional when put within the context of the fable introduction. The process of stylization may vary, however, according to the degree of consciousness the characters may have of the process; the Colonel's behavior is an unconscious pose, for instance, while Barnes' posture of domesticity is not, and the distinctions between nature and artifice become blurred.

Thackeray has, until the end, presented The Newcomes, on the one hand, as a romance, a fairy-tale, and on the other, as a realistic portrayal of society. This dichotomy of realism and fiction is overturned in the fable ending, for both aspects are dismissed as fictions. A sentimental ending, of the kind normally attached to fictional works, is avoided as is the fable world of poetic justice, although readers may arrange their own endings. The tendency of characters to imitate artificial patterns has its limitations and is proven futile ultimately, for the conventional fairy-tale ending has no place in the world of Vanity Fair. Thackeray is complex in that seeing himself as a realist,

he saturates his work with multiple fictions and is fascinated by the common tendency to imitation and fiction in life itself.

The interaction of nature and artifice in the novel and the importance of recurring cycles of behavior are further enhanced, as in Pendennis, by the illustrations executed not by Thackeray but by Richard Doyle. Although Thackeray's letters indicate that he initially regretted his decision of hiring the artist: "Doyle has been 3 weeks doing the engravings & they are not so good as mine now they are done" (Letters, III, 305), he later is impressed by Doyle's skill: "He does beautifully and easily what I wanted to do and can't" (Letters, III, 362).

Apparently, Thackeray gave few express instructions concerning the subjects for the illustrations, at least few have survived, although he did indicate in his text which passages he wished visualized. At Mrs. Hobson Newcome's party, for instance, Clive and Ethel are both described in specific detail; Doyle's illustration depicts exactly the line: "All the time we have been making this sketch Ethel is standing, looking at Clive; and the blushing youth casts down his eyes before her" (304). For his model of J. J. Ridley, Thackeray drew on Doyle himself, so the illustration "J. J. in Dreamland" is virtually a self-portrait surrounded by his "own favourite imaginative world of fairy-land."[10]

The majority of the illustrations as in Pendennis function on a purely realistic level, supporting the action of the story; the primary exceptions are the head letters which again emphasize the ambiguous relationship of artifice and reality. The design for the wrapper of the

original monthly parts, later repeated on Volume one of the first edition, depicts the eight fables used by Thackeray to set the moral theme. The design serves a dual purpose of identifying the actions of the characters in terms of a particular fable and moral, but it also designates the whole novel as another fable, reinforced by Thackeray's ending. The illustration for the second volume, of Clive with a woman and child, the woman encouraging him in his art, depicts the sentimental outcome which the readers devised for the fable.

But the pictorial capitals provide the most visual interest and reinforce the various levels of reality and illusion operating in the novel. Many relate to the theme of fairy-tale. The first example, in Chapter X, illustrates how fairy-tales go awry. Various young men, having escaped from the ivory-tower life designed by parents, are involved in dissolute behaviors, gambling, drunkenness, robbery, assault. While the letter reinforces the fairy-tale motif, it demands simultaneously an adjustment, for even in fairy-tales complete control of events is impossible; so it is that princes escape from their castles and fall victim to the world. The letter foreshadows Clive's disaster brought about by the Colonel's imposed plan. Recurring symbols depict Clive as a prince, the Colonel as a knight, sometimes medieval, sometimes sixteenth or seventeenth-century, and always Lady Kew as a witch, an ogre, the uncontrollable factor in a fairy-tale.

Illustrations of the Colonel either place him in realistic Victorian England or in a setting obviously anachronistic. In Chapter LXVI he is Don Quixote, for his election campaign he is a medieval knight at a jousting match, with Ethel he is a courtier, all romantic patterns

of behavior. The function of Lady Kew is to obstruct the Colonel's plans. The pictorial capital for Chapter XLII depicts her as an old crone on a branch projected between two pastoral lovers; she is a barrier to the romance of Clive and Ethel, developed further in the chapter by the presence of her choice, Lord Farintosh. The design is repeated with variations for Chapter XLVII, the dramatic scene in the Hôtel de Florac. While the crone has been replaced by Cupid, the figures are further divided by virtue of their own pretense. Ethel has learned her role well.

The letters often deal with recurring conventional patterns which the characters knowingly or unknowingly follow. For "An Old Story," Chapter XLI, Ethel is shown surrounded by admiring lovers. Mrs. MacKenzie in Chapter LXXV is a dragon chasing Clive, his father and his son. And although one of Thackeray's favorite images for sexual temptation, the siren, is rare, it appears in connection with Rosey and Mrs. Mack. The deliberate relationship which Thackeray intended between the marriage market, a central theme of The Newcomes, and Hogarth's Marriage à la Mode, has been examined by John Harvey in Victorian Novelists and their Illustrators.[11] Exaggerated deference to rank and wealth is portrayed very neatly by the crocodile in mourning at Lady Kew's funeral (Chapter LV); and the reference is again used in connection with the sentimental tears of Charles Honeyman, who becomes a marionette for Sherrick (Chapter XLIV).

Only two pictorial capitals deal with art exclusive of the art of imposed fictions. The first, in Chapter XVII, parallels Clive's art on canvas to the deceptive art of cosmetics; the second, the very

last illustration of the book in Chapter LXXX places art and literature, because of their tendency to snobbery and flattery, on the same worldly basis as law and love, all watched over by an imp.

The illustrations then as in Pendennis are not merely decoration; they frequently overlay one perspective of the narrative with another. A situation presented as social realism in the text is, in the capital, stylized in familiar convention. Thus what seems in one view unique in another view is universal, common fate or stylized in familiar lore and symbol.

Thackeray deals in The Newcomes with the same concerns which he manifested in his art reviews of the early 1830's: the pomposity and limitations of artists, and the problem of their dignity. Clive and J. J. are measured against the sham and pretense of the pictorial art world. Like Clive, Thackeray as a visual artist had not been zealous enough in his search for truth; as Thackeray writes in 1854, "all my private art business at Rome was an utter failure. . . . Art turned away her countenance or I did not interrogate her" (Letters, IV, 439). J. J., on the other hand, does interrogate her, and his dignity derives in part from his total serenity, in part from his complete and honest application, devoid of pretense and sham. But the art world is only one facet in Thackeray's analysis of reality and artifice, and because stylized behavior is the prevailing quality of life in his representation of Victorian society, the impression remains that it is a necessary and inescapable part of man's experience to be conventional. To successfully escape, as J. J. does and as Warrington does in Pendennis, requires

a degree of isolation or an alternative outlet for one's capacity for fantasy. A complete involvement in life ultimately results, consciously or unconsciously, in affectation of a role.

CONCLUSION

The claim that Thackeray is cavalier about his art is inappropriate; his whole artistic career is an investigation into the power and limitations of art. His interest in satire and his natural bent for parody, reinforced by the influence of Maginn and of eighteenth-century writers, especially Fielding, led Thackeray into burlesques of prominent writers. However, his intention is far more than satiric; it is part of a serious scrutiny of the subject, tone, and intensity of contemporary fiction. In his parodies, he is responding to the same questions, asked in the preface to Pendennis, which he answers in his novels: "Of a writer, who delivers himself up to you perforce unreservedly, you say, Is he honest? Does he tell the truth in the main? Does he seem actuated by a desire to find out and speak it? Is he a quack, who shams sentiments, or mouths for effect: Does he seek popularity by claptraps or other arts?" (XII, xxxv). Any writer guilty of these offences is fair game and since Thackeray believes that works, once published, are exposed absolutely to critics, writers have no reasonable grounds for offence.

In his early letters, Thackeray asks for art for art's sake; but his definition of this kind of art is much different from that of the aesthetic movement later in the century. What he encourages is art for moral's sake, art with a definite instructive intention bringing dignity to artists, and art which succeeds on its own merits, on its honesty rather than by means of partisan criticism or the artist's social success.

His energetic attempts to redress a balance by showing sham in the works of other journalists, those affecting a high tone for literature but who are more interested in monetary gain, are based on this philosophy of literary morality. But, having adopted the moral stance, Thackeray can see his own journalistic pretense, even if only in retrospect. In Lovel the Widower published in 1860, he can say through the narrator:

> I dare say I gave myself airs as editor of that confounded Museum, and proposed to educate the public taste, to diffuse morality and sound literature throughout the nation, and to pocket a liberal salary in return for my services. I dare say I printed my own sonnets, my own tragedy, my own verses . . . I dare say I wrote satirical articles, in which I piqued myself upon the fineness of my wit, and criticisms, got up for the nonce, out of encyclopaedias and biographical dictionaries; so that I would be actually astounded at my own knowledge. I dare say I made a gaby of myself to the world. (XVII, 74)

Following his critical tenet that artists work from personal experience, Thackeray himself deals with the worlds of fashionable society and art. His fiction becomes a means of analyzing the success and greatness of the world with its necessary elements of cant and humbug, and while his characters are placed in a realistic context, their conduct is shown to be part of recurring patterns of experience. The definite separation of reality and illusion in his parodies, still reinforced to a degree in Vanity Fair with his Becky puppet and Amelia doll, becomes in Pendennis and The Newcomes a subtle interplay of levels. Thackeray's early tendency to judge the artistry of other writers develops into judgement of his own fictional characters, into his stance of satirical-moralist or week-day preacher. And the novelist's responsibility, to discern artificiality and illustrate the truth, expands to include the task of understanding sympathetically and judging his characters.

In a fallen world, Thackeray sees that even social intercourse has become fictional. Such a world of deceit needs direction which can only be provided by true artists showing the way to truth for those individuals who seek it. The personal difficulty of reaching such a truth is complicated by Victorian attitudes to art. Thackeray resolves the problem of artistic decorum by an allusive style, but he never accepts the negative influence of social deceit upon creativity.

The closest Thackeray ever comes to presenting an ideal character is in J. J. Ridley, but even here Thackeray tempers that happiness with discontent and J. J. cannot conquer the effects of his social environment. In Philip, he is a highly successful painter, a full R. A., and Thackeray still idealizes his profession: "To be a perfect painter, and to have your hand in perfect command, I hold to be one of life's summa bona. . . . Here is occupation: here is excitement: here is struggle and victory: and here is profit. Can man ask more from fortune? Dukes and Rothschilds may be envious of such a man" (XVI, 75). And the comfort and support one can derive from art is contrasted with the weaknesses of the world. "In certain minds, art is dominant and superior to all beside--stronger than love, stronger than hate, or care, or penury. . . . Love may frown and be false, but the other mistress never will. She is always true: always new: always the friend, companion, inestimable consoler" (XVI, 75). But with all these comforts from art, superior to all comforts derived from society, J. J. does not remain in his unique position in The Newcomes of having his desire and being satisfied--J. J., fascinated by Philip's background as he had been by Clive's, idolizes him and "would rather have been gentleman than genius ever so great"

(XVI, 77). Even J. J. has been contaminated by society.

A true artist must always be in control, must always be able to distinguish between truth and fiction, and not become the victim of illusions. J. J. has total control of his art, and Thackeray allows this should be a characteristic of literary artists also. As he says in one of his letters: "Novel writers should not be in a passion with their characters as I imagine, but describe them, good or bad, with a like calm" (Letters, III, 67). Neither does the true artist attempt to change reality radically, but rather interprets it with honesty. Only bad artists seek to force life into pattern.

Thackeray's fundamental ideas, his belief in truth to nature, his dislike of exaggeration, artificiality and pretension, develop in direct opposition to Bulwer's idealization of art, and to the narrative stance of his contemporary writers. For a while, this truth to nature limits Thackeray's vision to a concentration on the follies and vices of society with none of the love and sympathy evident in the later novels. His tenet that art take its inspiration from nature is violated by characters in these novels whose fictions derive from other art forms. Their creation of fictions for their own use with no larger, moral purpose constitutes a blasphemy against true art. Both Pendennis and Clive are guilty of this sin, at some point in their careers, but J. J., even with his social discontent, never is. The creation of false art is worse than no appreciation of art at all; Blanche is condemned far more for her absolute fiction than Rosey is for her complete lack of artistic sensibility.

The ambiguities of artifice and nature, affectation and truth, are important themes in Pendennis and The Newcomes. Thackeray is preoccupied by the obligations and restrictions of the artist in relationship to his public, and by the degree of art present in life, the stylization of behavior. And the novels show an intense concern for the individual's circumscribed sense of uniqueness set against the repeating cycles and overall patterns of human experience as in the constant reference to Ecclesiastes or the introductory fable of The Newcomes. In short, art and the questions of truth and identity it raises are basic subject matter for these novels and are important intellectually to the characters' vision of experience.

NOTES

Chapter I

[1]Charlotte Brontë, Jane Eyre, p. 2.

[2]"Unsigned Review," The Times, 29 August 1855, rpt. in Thackeray The Critical Heritage, eds. Geoffrey Tillotson and Donald Hawes, pp. 228, 230.

[3]Gordon N. Ray, ed., The Letters and Private Papers of William Makepeace Thackeray. All subsequent references to Thackeray's letters will be given in the text by volume number and page.

[4]George Saintsbury, ed., The Oxford Thackeray. All references, unless otherwise stated, are to this edition and will be given in the text by volume and page number.

[5]Miriam Thrall, Rebellious Fraser's, p. 6.

[6]Thrall, p. 13.

[7]For a discussion of Thackeray's early contributions to Fraser's, see Thrall, pp. 61-63, also Appendix I, pp. 247-62.

[8]The Right Hon. Lord Lytton, "On Art in Fiction," Pamphlets and Sketches, p. 326.

[9]Fraser's Magazine for Town and Country, Volume I (1830), p. 511.

[10]Sir Edward Bulwer, Eugene Aram, p. vii.

[11]Fraser's, Volume VI (1832), p. 67.

[12]Articles additional to those specifically cited which refer to Bulwer or the Newgate novel include: "Our Batch of Novels for Christmas, 1837," Fraser's, Volume XVII (1838); "Half a Crown's Worth of Cheap Knowledge," Fraser's, Volume XVII (1838); "Horae Catnachianae," Fraser's, Volume XIX (1839); "A Box of Novels," Fraser's, Volume XXIX (1844); "A Grumble about Christmas Books," Fraser's, Volume XXXV (1847).

[13]The Earl of Lytton, The Life of Edward Bulwer First Lord Lytton, I, p. 81.

[14]Fraser's, Volume XXI (1840), p. 228.

[15]Keith Hollingsworth, The Newgate Novel 1830-1847, p. 126.

[16]In that preface, Dickens wrote "It is useless to discuss whether the conduct and character of the girl seems natural or unnatural, probable or improbable, right or wrong. IT IS TRUE." Charles Dickens, The Adventures of Oliver Twist, p. xvii.

[17]Gordon N. Ray, Thackeray's Contributions to The Morning Chronicle, p. 78. Hereafter designated as Morning Chronicle.

[18]Morning Chronicle, pp. 77-78.

[19]Ibid., p. 140.

[20]Lionel Stevenson, The Showman of Vanity Fair, p. 71.

[21]Stevenson, p. 142.

[22]Examiner, January 19, 1850, p. 35.

[23]Thackeray's article, a response to a memoir by Bulwer included in an edition of Blanchard's Sketches from Life, objected to Bulwer's indication that Blanchard, if freed from poverty and family duties, would have produced a masterpiece. Thackeray insisted Blanchard "had a duty, much more imperative upon him than the preparation of questionable great works,--to get his family their dinner" (VI, 554).

[24]Thackeray was pleased when Forster himself received a state appointment. See Letters, III, 552, 564.

[25]Thackeray's attempts at a sinecure, all unsuccessful, included an attempt in 1848 for the position of Assistant Secretary at the General Post Office (Letters, II, 427); a desire in 1851 for a post from the Lord Chancellor (Letters, II, 791); an attempt in 1854 for the position of Auditorship of the Duchy of Lancashire (Letters, III, 404); an application for a police magistracy in 1855 (Letters, III, 416); and in 1855, he discovered that he might have had a position with the Board of Trade if he had asked (Letters, III, 425).

[26]The Letters of Charles Dickens 1833-1870, edited by his sister-in-law and his eldest daughter, p. 235.

[27]Edgar Johnson, Charles Dickens His Tragedy and Triumph, p. 738.

[28]The Letters of Charles Dickens, p. 235.

[29]Ibid., p. 235.

[30]Lewis Melville, The Life of William Makepeace Thackeray, II, 157.

[31]Melville, II, 160.

[32]Ibid., p. 159.

[33]Ibid., p. 158.

[34]Ibid., p. 159.

[35]Ironically, Thackeray applied to Dickens for assistance from the Guild on behalf of a friend in 1858. See The Letters of Charles Dickens, p. 445.

[36]Gordon N. Ray, Thackeray The Age of Wisdom, p. 153.

[37]Charles Dickens, Little Dorrit, p. 191.

[38]Little Dorrit, p. 376.

[39]Melville, II, 28.

[40]Gordon N. Ray, "The Garrick Club Affair," p. 827.

[41]The Garrick Club Affair has been the most fully documented incident of Thackeray's life. For more information, see Letters, IV, 89-122; Ray, Thackeray The Age of Wisdom, pp. 278-90; Johnson, Charles Dickens His Tragedy and Triumph, pp. 932-35. Yates also privately printed a pamphlet, Mr. Thackeray, Mr. Yates and the Garrick Club.

[42]Charles Dickens, "In Memoriam," p. 130.

Chapter II

[1]Juliet McMaster, Thackeray The Major Novels, pp. 51-86.

[2]Barbara Hardy, The Exposure of Luxury, pp. 68-94.

[3]James Wheatley, Patterns in Thackeray's Fiction, p. 137.

[4]Saintsbury, The Oxford Thackeray, Volume XII. All references to Pendennis are to this edition and will be given in the text by page number.

[5]There is some disagreement on this subject. Ray says Maginn is the source for Shandon in Thackeray The Age of Wisdom, p. 114; Miriam Thrall disputes there is the slightest evidence for such a claim in Rebellious Fraser's, pp. 208-11.

[6]John Harvey, Victorian Novelists and their Illustrators, pp. 76-102.

[7]Joan Stevens, "Thackeray's Vanity Fair," pp. 19-38.

[8]Geoffrey Tillotson, Thackeray The Novelist, p. 37; and Harvey, p. 223.

Chapter III

[1]For accounts of Thackeray's experiences as a visual artist, see Gordon N. Ray, Thackeray The Uses of Adversity, pp. 167-74; Letters, I, appendix V; and Gordon N. Ray, The Buried Life, p. 16.

[2]Nevertheless, some artists, like Smee, enjoyed social prestige of an unprecedented nature; and some, Millais and Landseer, for instance, were quite wealthy. Jeremy Maas, Victorian Painters, p. 14.

[3]Saintsbury, The Oxford Thackeray, Volume XIV. All subsequent references to The Newcomes are to this edition and will be given in the text by page number.

[4]Ray, The Uses of Adversity, pp. 168-69.

[5]For a more detailed account of the effect on historic painting of the government program to decorate the Houses of Parliament, see John Stegman, Victorian Taste, pp. 129-53; and Graham Reynolds, Victorian Painting, pp. 32-39.

[6]J. J., of course, appears again in Philip, but he is essentially unchanged. However, Thackeray, in a story which he burnt, intended "to show J. J. married, and exhibit him with the trials of a wife and children. [He] meant to make him in love with another man's wife, and recover him through his attachment for the little ones." Ray, The Age of Wisdom, p. 265. Also see Letters, III, 619.

[7]R. D. McMaster, "The Pygmalion Theme in The Newcomes," pp. 22-38.

[8]Morning Chronicle, p. 33.

[9]R. D. McMaster, pp. 32-33.

[10]Harvey, Victorian Novelists and their Illustrators, p. 95.

[11]Harvey, pp. 95-98.

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